



The
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William and Harry come together to mourn Queen

- Charles III proclaimed King in ceremony at St James's Palace
- Queen's coffin to be driven to Edinburgh today to lie at rest
- Monarch declares bank holiday for funeral on 19 September

ANDREW WOODCOCK
POLITICAL EDITOR

Princes William and Harry were reunited in grief yesterday as they viewed floral tributes to Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle. The Prince of Wales and Duke of Sussex, who were accompanied by

their wives Princess Kate and Meghan, spoke with well-wishers just a day after King Charles III used his first speech to try to draw a line under the rows resulting from Harry's decision to withdraw from royal duties. It is understood that Prince William invited his brother to

join him for their first public appearance together since the unveiling of a statue of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 2021. The coffin bearing the Queen's body will leave Balmoral today on the first leg of its journey towards the state funeral at Westminster Abbey on Monday 19 September.



Editorials

The King was right to let the public in on the magic

King Charles “let in daylight upon magic”, and the result was partly as Walter Bagehot predicted. The first time the television cameras have been allowed to broadcast, live, a privy council meeting revealed it to be about as magical as the average parish committee.

Apart from the pomp and Ruritarian circumstance surrounding it, the actual business of the accession council consisted of Penny Mordaunt, lord president of the council, reading out antique phrases about seals, the King saying, “Approved,” and a lot of people signing some documents.

Bagehot was wrong, however, to suggest that it would be a bad thing to reveal the inner workings of the British constitution. The King has made a welcome decision to make the transfer of royal authority as open as possible. He was right to meet and shake hands with members of the public outside Buckingham Palace on Friday, and even to allow his hand to be kissed in a few cases, because it is important that the royal family should be engaged with the people.

If we are to have a constitutional monarchy in this country, and we are for the foreseeable future because it is considerably more

popular than any alternative arrangement, it must be democratic, open and in touch with the people.

The privy council is, in Bagehot's terminology, part of the dignified rather than the efficient part of the constitution. Its role is ceremonial and symbolic. It was fitting that all six living former prime ministers were in the front row for the formal proclamation of Charles as King: the privy council helps to bind all the parties and governments past and present in a show of constitutional continuity.

Ceremony and symbol matter, which is why they have them in republics such as the United States and France. They signify popular consent to constitutions; they are a way of affirming the rules of the game. So King Charles was right to let the cameras in, so that the people could see for themselves that the monarchy is indeed, constitutionally, just a pen. The government has the power to make decisions, on the authority of the people in elections; his role is just to sign.

When the nation has a new prime minister and a new monarch in the same week, such openness is all the more important in underpinning the continuity of the constitution.

For a constitutional monarchy to work requires immense restraint and discretion on the part of the sovereign. King Charles's mother was a model of how it should be done because no one ever thought that she was trying to influence the decisions of the democratically elected representatives of the people. So the King was right, in his address to the nation on Friday, to promise to follow her example.

She will be a hard act to follow, but the King has made the right decisions at the start of his reign to maintain the principle of consent on which the monarchy, and its role as the guarantor of our democratic constitution, rests.

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Truce as William and Harry mourn death of the Queen



William, Kate, Harry and Meghan acknowledge the crowds in Windsor yesterday (Reuters)

ANDREW WOODCOCK

POLITICAL EDITOR

Princes William and Harry were reunited in grief yesterday afternoon as they viewed floral tributes to Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle. The Prince of Wales and Duke of Sussex, who were accompanied by their wives Princess Kate and Meghan, spoke with well-wishers just a day after King Charles III used part of his first address to the nation to try and draw a line

under the rows resulting from Harry's decision to withdraw from royal duties.

A royal source said: "The Prince of Wales thought it was an important show of unity at an incredibly difficult time for the family." It is understood that Prince William invited his younger brother to join him for what was their first public appearance together since the unveiling of a statue of their mother, Diana, Princess of Wales, in July 2021. They both attended a service of thanksgiving for the Queen's platinum jubilee earlier this year but did not speak.

Their walkabout came as William issued a heartfelt tribute to the woman he knew as "grannie", hailing her as an "extraordinary" leader for the country and a source of wisdom and reassurance for her family.

The coffin bearing the Queen's body will leave Balmoral Castle on Sunday on the first leg of its journey towards the state funeral at Westminster Abbey on Monday 19 September, travelling to Edinburgh, where it will lie at rest in St Giles' Cathedral. Scotland's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, said the "poignant" journey would give the public a chance to "mark our country's shared loss".

King Charles has ordered a bank holiday across the whole United Kingdom on the day of the funeral, to allow millions of Britons to participate in the final farewell to the monarch who reigned for 70 years.

From Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh, the coffin will be taken in procession along the Royal Mile to St Giles' Cathedral. After a service attended by members of the royal family, it will remain at the cathedral for a period of lying at rest until 13 September. It will then be flown by the RAF to the Northolt airbase in London and taken to Buckingham Palace, then on to parliament, where the Queen will lie in state in Westminster Hall.

Over the following days ahead of the state funeral, the coffin will stand on a catafalque in the hall, guarded by troops from the Household Cavalry and Guards regiments. Thousands of people

are expected to file past the late monarch's coffin during the period of lying in state.



King Charles meets members of the public in London yesterday (PA)

From there, it is expected to be taken on a gun carriage hauled by Royal Navy sailors to Westminster Abbey for the state funeral service, then moved to St George's Chapel in Windsor, where the Queen will be laid to rest. The coffin of Prince Philip, the Queen's husband of 73 years who died in April 2021, is expected to be moved from the royal vault at Windsor to be buried alongside his wife.

After being formally proclaimed King in an accession ceremony at St James's Palace in London, he paid tribute to his mother's reign for "its duration, its dedication and its devotion" and promised to follow her example of "lifelong love and selfless service".

In an address to the nation hours after the Queen's death on Thursday, King Charles made a point of not only confirming William as the new Prince of Wales but also sending a message of "love for Harry and Meghan as they continue to build their lives overseas".

His comment was seen as a very public attempt to heal the rift which has grown up since the Sussexes' "Megxit" move to California and their decision to speak out about life inside the royal family.

First signs of differences between the brothers came in 2019, when the pair broke up their joint foundation as Harry and Meghan moved out of Kensington Palace amid allegations of bullying of staff. Harry told a TV documentary that he and his elder brother were on “different paths”.

Two years later, in a bombshell interview with Oprah Winfrey, the Duke described his relationship with William as “space”, adding: “Time heals all things, hopefully.”

He told Winfrey he felt let down by his father, who he said had stopped taking his calls. Meanwhile, Meghan accused the then Duchess of Cambridge of making her cry in the run-up to her wedding.

The brothers both went to Balmoral on the day of the Queen’s death. And on Saturday, they emerged together from Windsor Castle with their wives, all dressed in black.

Both brothers shook hands with young and old, accepted bunches of flowers and thanked people for their wishes.

Earlier in the day, the formal process of transition to the new sovereign’s reign continued with the meeting of the accession council to proclaim Charles King.



The royals inspect floral tributes yesterday (PA)

In the presence of Prime Minister Liz Truss and all of her living predecessors – Sir John Major, Sir Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron, Theresa May and Boris Johnson – an official

read the proclamation declaring Charles III “our only lawful and rightful liege lord”.

The King was not present for the ceremony in the palace’s picture gallery but immediately afterwards held his first meeting with the privy council in the throne room, where he vowed to follow the “inspiring example” of his mother in fulfilling his duties as head of state.

And, in a clear indication that he intends like the late Queen to remain monarch until death, he promised to serve the nation in this role “for what remains to me of my life”.

The King said he was “deeply aware of this great inheritance and the duties and heavy responsibilities of sovereignty which have now passed to me”.

And he added: “In taking up these responsibilities, I shall strive to follow the inspiring example I have been set in upholding constitutional government and to seek the peace, harmony and prosperity of the peoples of these islands and in the Commonwealth realms and territories throughout the world.”

Ms Truss and other senior parliamentarians, including Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer and Commons speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle, later made oaths or affirmations of allegiance to the new King during an unusual Saturday sitting of the House to hear tributes to the Queen.



Liz Truss signs the proclamation of accession of King Charles III (AP)

And King Charles held an informal audience with the prime minister and members of her cabinet at Buckingham Palace.

In his statement paying tribute to the Queen as monarch and grandmother, Prince William said: “She was by my side at my happiest moments. And she was by my side during the saddest days of my life. I thank her for the kindness she showed my family and me.”

He added: “My grandmother famously said that grief was the price we pay for love. All of the sadness we will feel in the coming weeks will be testament to the love we felt for our extraordinary Queen. I will honour her memory by supporting my father, the King, in every way I can.”

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Thousands come to witness Charles III proclaimed King



Guards in ceremonial uniform offer three cheers to the King at St James's Palace yesterday (AP)

COLIN DRURY

IN FRIARY COURT, LONDON

There was pomp, there was ceremony, there were thousands of people trying desperately not to forget that the national anthem now demands “God save the King”.

Large crowds gathered outside St James's Palace and along The Mall yesterday morning to cheer King Charles III's accession to

the throne. They gathered below the famed balcony in Friary Court to witness a man whose title is the garter king of arms proclaim the new monarch following a formal ceremony inside.

State trumpeters sounded the royal salute before the King's Guard gave three cheers – Bearskin hats raised with each one – and a rousing rendition of the national anthem was performed.

“It was a bit of an odd experience singing ‘God Save the King,’” said Stephen Jones, a 28-year-old cost consultant, who was among the thousands in the courtyard. “It definitely took a bit of concentration to remember. ‘God Save the Queen’ comes so naturally. It’s what we’ve been singing our whole lives. It will take a bit of adjusting.”

His partner, Sydney Jung, had been standing right in front of French TV cameras during the anthem. “So I was feeling pressure not to forget,” the 28-year-old HR worker said.



Stephen Jones and Sydney Jung think the new version of the national anthem will take some getting used to (Colin Drury)

The pair – like almost everyone there – had come along because they wanted to witness a moment of history. “Days like this – they don’t come along very often,” Mr Jones declared before a moment’s reflection (perhaps on Charles’s vintage). “The next one will probably come along a bit sooner, though,” he decided.

Some of those present had nursed a vague hope that the king himself might appear – “A bit disappointing,” decreed 54-year-

old Suzanne Jones on hearing the news that he would not – but most appeared delighted simply to see the ancient ritual being performed. When the state trumpeters emerged to kick things off, shortly before 11am, a thousand mobiles were raised into the air – where they stayed until the whole thing was finished.

“It was amazing!” said Susanne Wolf – about the ceremony, not the phones. “My mother, who is 85, was here for the coronation of the Queen, so this feels like full circle for us as a family. I have been getting very emotional about it, actually. It is a wonderful occasion. It is special.”



The garter principal king of arms reads the proclamation of the new monarch, King Charles III (PA)

She, her sister and her sister’s two teenage children had travelled from Germany – where they all live – especially to be there. They had driven from Frankfurt to Brussels on Friday evening, hopped on the Eurostar to London, got a couple of hours’ sleep at a hostel, and then gone straight to St James’s Palace. A 10-hour journey for a ceremony that lasted 10 minutes, no more. They were due to set off back home early this morning.

Was it worth it? “Absolutely worth it,” said the 59-year-old. “This is history. When the news came on Thursday [about the Queen’s death], I just had an overwhelming urge to be here. I wanted to pay my respects and show my support for the royal family.”

For some of those watching, part of the thrill appeared to be seeing various politicians standing in their own fenced-off enclosure within the courtyard. The great, the good, and David

Cameron were all there. When a whisper went through the crowd that Boris Johnson had turned out, a palpable buzz could be felt. Mobile phones went up again. Nick Clegg's emergence caused slightly less excitement.



(Left to right) Susanne Wolf with niece Annika, sister Conny and nephew Jonathan had come from Germany (Colin Drury)

As proceedings were wound up – “Was that it?” one child could be heard asking – thoughts for many of those present turned to the King and the new era ahead.

“Well, he’s not his mother,” said Sue Burke, diplomatically. “But I think he will do a good job. I think he’s got Camilla, who appears a very good influence, and they’ve had a long time to prepare, and I think he will ease into it quite naturally.”

Time will tell, of course, but certainly – if the thousands at yesterday’s ceremony are anything to go by – he starts off his reign with some considerable goodwill. As the crowd began to break up and head off with their moment of history safely in their video albums, a shout or two could be heard going up: “Long live the King!”

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What is the privy council?

The work of this little-known advisory body normally takes place far from the public eye – that is, until its members are needed to proclaim a new sovereign, writes **Chris Stevenson**



The new Prince of Wales, the Queen Consort and King Charles III during the meeting of the privy council at St James's Palace yesterday (PA)

The privy council is the kind of official body you are unlikely to hear much about in normal circumstances. However, the process of the proclamation of a new sovereign – as took place yesterday – is certainly enough to grab the public's attention.

That duty falls to the accession council, which is a ceremonial body made up of privy council members as well as certain other

dignitaries, including the lord mayor of London, high commissioners and acting high commissioners of the realms. Only privy counsellors attend the second part of the accession, which on this occasion essentially doubled as King Charles III's first privy council meeting.

The history of the privy council – which is essentially a group of advisers to the monarch – is long: it is said to date back to the 13th century, although the power and influence it held began to decline in the 17th and 18th centuries as the cabinet gained more political authority.

Orders in and of the council have the same force as the law; they can be legislative, executive or judicial, and examples range from the constitution of an overseas territory to the setting up of a new government department. Orders are either statutory or issued under royal prerogative; prerogative orders are for instances when there is no legislation that allocates responsibility for a matter to a particular cabinet minister.

Counsellors are appointed for life by the monarch, on the advice of the prime minister, and they are individuals who hold, or have held, senior political, judicial, or ecclesiastical office in the UK or within the Commonwealth.

All those present stand during meetings, a tradition said to have been started by Queen Victoria, who also set the quorum: three privy counsellors. However, it is only officially a “council” if it is also attended by the monarch (or counsellors of state). Without their being present, the meeting constitutes a committee, of which there are several. The most important of these is the judicial committee; other standing committees advise on matters relating to the Channel Islands, universities and royal charters.

Privy council meetings take place, on average, once a month, with only those summoned needing to attend (usually cabinet ministers). A fuller meeting of the council is essentially only called to proclaim a new monarch, or upon the announcement of a reigning king or queen's intention to marry.

With around 700 members, there are very few instances when all will be in attendance. St James's Palace, where the accession council was held yesterday, could not have held that many people. Attendance at the event was limited to only around 200 members, apparently in order to maintain the "high presentation and safety standards required of the occasion".

A ballot is said to have been held to allocate places – assuming the six living former prime ministers, along with former opposition party leaders Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband, were all shoo-ins. I'm sure there were plenty who would have liked to be present, given the historic nature of the most recent meeting – but beyond this weekend, the council's work will go on as normal.

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There's one word that sums up Elizabeth's long reign



It was the Queen – along with Prince Philip – who created a monarchy for the 21st century (AP)

ALISON WEIR

When, on her 21st birthday, the future Elizabeth II dedicated her life to her future subjects, her words were not spoken lightly. For the one word that sums up her long reign is “dedication”. For the late Queen, there was no other option. For 70 years and more, her royal duties and the needs of her subjects were her

highest priority, and she was a shining example to everyone in public service, and indeed in all walks of life.

Elizabeth II might have epitomised well-dressed, middle-class England, embodying all its best and most cherished values, but she was a moderniser. Although raised in the Victorian tradition, it was she – with the support of Prince Philip – who created a monarchy for the 21st century, with the key word being accessibility. The Queen brought into being the walkabout, which enabled her subjects and many others to meet her and other members of her family. She opened up Buckingham Palace and Sandringham House to the public and sanctioned exhibitions affording fascinating, even intimate, insights into her public and private lives. As far back as 1969, she authorised the film *Royal Family*, and thereafter she allowed unprecedented access to photographers and filmmakers while remaining conscious of the constitutional historian Walter Bagehot's injunction not to let too much daylight in on magic.

She was never slow to respond to public criticism. In the 1950s, Lord Altrincham criticised her speeches as those of a “priggish schoolgirl”, and immediately the Queen adopted a more professional and less starchy approach to monarchy. In 1992, her annus horribilis, when Windsor Castle burned and her children's marital problems dominated the headlines, the Queen took note of calls for her to pay income tax, and duly agreed to do so. In 1997, in response to rather cruel criticism of her invisibility after Princess Diana's death – when, as she later revealed, she was comforting her grieving grandchildren – she came to London and bowed to demands to speak to the nation on television.

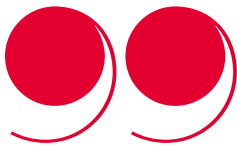
The decision by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, to step away from royal duties in 2020 – a process formally completed in 2021 – was another period of upheaval. Although the response from Buckingham Palace to a very personal interview by the Duke and Duchess was typical of the Queen: “The whole family is saddened to learn the full extent of how challenging the last few years have been for Harry and Meghan. The issues raised, particularly that of race, are

concerning. While some recollections may vary, they are taken very seriously and will be addressed by the family privately. Harry, Meghan ... will always be much-loved family members.”

Above all the Queen has stood for cohesion. As monarch, she was head of the state and the armed forces, defender of the faith and supreme governor of the Church of England, and the fount of justice and honour. Above all, she was a focus for national unity and identity. No one could argue that Elizabeth II did not excel in these, her many roles. By the very nature of her office, and because of her gravitas and her dedication to duty, she provided a great and enduring sense of stability.



Elizabeth II has been the only head on the coinage that they have known, and many have perhaps taken for granted her virtues and her innovations



No one should ever underestimate Elizabeth II’s political acumen. Daily, for 70 years, she “did her boxes”, reading state papers and familiarising herself with all the concerns of government, until she inevitably became more knowledgeable and experienced than even the longest-serving politicians. We are not allowed to know what was said at the weekly meetings between the Queen and her prime ministers, but certainly, her advice and understanding were invaluable, especially in her latter decades.

Her face was famous all over the world. Tirelessly she visited and toured countless countries, or played host to visiting heads of state, doing her best to nurture lasting good relations, and

offering the ultimate in British hospitality. To many, she represented all that is best about Britain and its way of life. Thanks to her influence, the royal family has in a sense become our own family; we celebrate life's milestones or mourn tragedy with them.

We have been incredibly fortunate to have Elizabeth II as our monarch for so long. Monarchy in Britain is hereditary, and therefore something of a lottery, but by a stroke of fate, this country was blessed in having the late Queen as its sovereign and head of state. Most of her subjects cannot remember the reign of her father, George VI. For them, Elizabeth II has been the only head on the coinage that they have known, and many have perhaps taken for granted her virtues and her innovations.

Dedication, cohesion, modernisation, stability and experience: these are the qualities and attributes for which we will remember Elizabeth II. When her great predecessor and namesake, Queen Elizabeth I – a monarch who ruled as well as reigned, and a very different character – came to the end of her long reign, she was able to say to her subjects: “Though God hath raised me high, this I account the glory of my crown: that I have reigned with your loves.” Elizabeth II could have said the same, and perhaps more deservedly, because although she did not rule, she reigned with the highest integrity and devotion.

Alison Weir is a historian and author whose many books include studies of Elizabeth I, Henry VIII and Mary, Queen of Scots

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Putin congratulates King on his accession to the throne



The Russian leader also wrote to the new monarch following the death of the Queen (Reuters)

DAVID HARDING

INTERNATIONAL EDITOR

Russia's president Vladimir Putin became one of the first world leaders to congratulate King Charles III, who was proclaimed the new British sovereign yesterday. "Please accept my sincere congratulations on your accession to the throne," read a statement posted on Twitter by the Russian embassy in London.

“I wish Your Majesty success, good health and all the best,” it added.

Prince Charles was officially declared the British king in a ceremony yesterday morning. Although Charles became king immediately after the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, on Thursday, his accession to the throne was formally approved yesterday at a meeting of Britain’s accession council. The historic ceremony was televised for the first time.

Despite tensions over the Ukraine war, and British-Russian relations being at a low, Mr Putin also wrote to the new monarch when the death of the Queen was announced, offering “sincere sympathy” to the country following her death.

He wrote: “The most important events in the recent history of the United Kingdom are inextricably linked with the name of Her Majesty. For many decades, Elizabeth II rightfully enjoyed the love and respect of her subjects, as well as authority on the world stage. I wish you courage and perseverance in the face of this heavy, irreparable loss. I ask you to convey the words of sincere sympathy and support to the members of the royal family and all the people of Great Britain.”

For good measure, the Kremlin also said that the wisdom of the late Queen would be missed internationally. The Russian people had “great respect” for Queen Elizabeth II, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Friday, singling out her qualities of “wisdom and authority”.

“Such qualities are in very short supply on the international stage at the moment,” he added pointedly.

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William says he is grieving for grandmother and Queen



‘An extraordinary leader’: Queen Elizabeth II and Prince William together in 2017 (PA)

ADAM FORREST

Prince William has said he is grieving for both his grandmother and “our extraordinary Queen”, as he made a very personal tribute to the late sovereign.

“I knew this day would come, but it will be some time before the reality of life without Grannie will truly be real,” said the new Prince of Wales in his first public remarks following the death of Queen Elizabeth II. “I will honour her memory by supporting my father, the King, in every way I can,” William said, speaking of his father King Charles III’s accession to the throne.

William said the world had “lost an extraordinary leader”, adding that the Queen had provided the perfect example of “service and dignity in public life” to his generation. He continued: “I, however, have lost a grandmother. And while I will grieve her loss, I also feel incredibly grateful. I have had the benefit of the Queen’s wisdom and reassurance into my fifth decade.”

The prince also said his children would have “memories that will last their whole lives” of their great-grandmother, and that his wife, Princess Kate, “has had twenty years of her guidance and support”.

He said of the Queen: “She was by my side at my happiest moments. And she was by my side during the saddest days of my life. I thank her for the kindness she showed my family and me.” He added: “My grandmother famously said that grief was the price we pay for love. All of the sadness we will feel in the coming weeks will be testament to the love we felt for our extraordinary Queen.”

William was present when his father was formally proclaimed King in an accession council ceremony at St James’s Palace in London earlier yesterday. William and Kate joined Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, to view floral tributes at Windsor Castle yesterday afternoon – the couples’ first appearance in public together since March 2020. A royal source said William had asked Harry and Meghan to “join him and the Princess of Wales” on the walkabout.

The King announced on Friday that William and Kate were to be the new Prince and Princess of Wales. This means that William follows in his father’s footsteps, and that Kate has become the first person since Diana, Princess of Wales to use the title.

William's tribute to his grandmother came as Buckingham Palace announced that the Queen's funeral would be held at Westminster Abbey at 11am on Monday 19 September, which has also been declared a bank holiday. Ahead of the funeral service, the coffin bearing the Queen's body will lie in state in Westminster Hall for "four clear days" from 14 September to allow members of the public to pay their respects.

The new prime minister Liz Truss, along with her ministers, opposition party leaders and other senior figures, took an oath of allegiance to the new King as parliament met yesterday for a rare Saturday sitting. The King also held an audience with the new prime minister and her cabinet, followed by a separate audience with Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey, and the SNP's Westminster leader Ian Blackford.

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Royals and public share memories of the Queen



Andrew, Anne and Edward inspect floral tributes to the Queen yesterday (AP)

HOLLY BANCROFT

AT BALMORAL

Members of the royal family wiped away tears as they read some of the thousands of tributes to the Queen left at the gates of Balmoral.

Prince Andrew joined his siblings, Princess Anne, Prince Edward, and other senior royals to greet well-wishers after

attending a private memorial church service yesterday.

Dressed in a black suit, Prince Andrew, who has taken a step back from public life after his car-crash *Newsnight* interview over his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein, said: “We’ve been allowed one day, now we start the process of handing her on.”

The Princess Royal’s children, Peter Philips and Zara Tindall, also came to see the messages left by the public, as did the Countess of Wessex, her daughter Lady Louise Windsor, Princess Eugenie and Princess Beatrice.

Prince Andrew took a moment to put his arms around his daughters as they stood and read the tributes. The family was brought to the Scottish estate in a cavalcade of Range Rovers after attending a short service dedicated to the late Queen in the church she regularly attended when staying at Balmoral.



Members of the royal family wave to well-wishers outside Balmoral Castle (Reuters)

Making his way down the lines of the crowd, Prince Andrew talked to a couple, Heather Blewitt and James Dyson, who were clutching a bunch of purple, white and yellow flowers. He asked where they had come from and thanked them when they told him they had driven up from Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

“It makes a difference when the royals come out,” Ms Blewitt, who had driven five and a half hours to be there.

Donna Crompton, 58, held Princess Eugenie’s hand and patted her on the back after spotting her tearing up as she walked along

the line of mourners. Ms Crompton had travelled from Liverpool to Balmoral yesterday morning with her husband Andy, 63. When she told Prince Edward how far she had travelled, he said: “Crikey, that’s a long way!”.



James Dyson, left, and Heather Blewitt were thanked by Prince Andrew for travelling so far to be at Balmoral (The Independent)

“Sophie was also noticeably upset. She said ‘thank you for coming, it means a lot,’” Ms Crompton added.

Matthew Roland-Page, 25, had come to Balmoral with his 18-month-old baby Ezra. Standing with his young son in the crowd, Princess Beatrice picked him out and commented on how well behaved the child was. “She said he was being very patient and she wasn’t sure her children necessarily would,” he told *The Independent*.



Matthew Roland-Page with his young son Ezra (The Independent)

Princess Beatrice gave birth to a daughter, Sienna, last September and has a stepson, Christopher Woolf Mapelli Mozzi, with her husband, Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi. Speaking about why he had come to pay his respects to the Queen, Mr Roland-Page recalled how he had met Her Majesty when she came to open gardens at the Royal Infirmary where he worked.

His parents and grandparents had also been guests at royal garden parties. “I hope King Charles will be like his mother. I think the world needs more people with grace and a listening ear to the problems that the world is facing,” he said.



Zara Tindall holds back tears as she looks at messages left by the public (Reuters)

Cameron, 11, and Blair, 7, shook Princess Eugenie's hand as she made her way up the Balmoral driveway to look at the flowers. "Prince Edward and Prince Andrew said 'thank you for coming,'" Blair said. "We saw the royal family walking up here and shook hands with Princess Eugenie," Cameron said.

Their mother, Katheryn Groudwater, said they weren't expecting to see the royals and had just come to lay flowers and pay their respects.

"I think a lot of people in Scotland thought that the Queen viewed Balmoral as her spiritual home. I feel like it was her wish to pass away here," she said. She thought King Charles came across really well in the speech but hadn't expected him to mention Harry and Meghan.



Katheryn Groundwater, 36, came to Balmoral with her sons Cameron and Blair (The Independent)



Cameron, left, and Blair got to shake Princess Eugenie's hand (The Independent)

“I think he just wants everyone to come back together again – instead of being separated – and be a family again.”

One family had made a nine-and-a-half-hour journey from St Albans, Hertfordshire, to pay their respects at Balmoral. Joseph Philipose, who works in Fintech, said he started driving on Friday night at 10pm – reaching the Scottish estate by mid-morning. “We strongly felt that we should come here because the Queen’s body is here. We thought of coming here and paying the last respects with the children,” he told *The Independent*.



Joseph Philipose, right, with his wife Geetha and their two children Bennett and Thea (The Independent)

“The Queen was always an inspiration for me and for my children and I feel satisfied now that we have come here and said a prayer for her.” His daughter, Thea, said: “I hope King Charles can inspire us as well, just like the Queen.”

They had not yet been to Buckingham Palace but had planned to get some rest and return to London to see the Queen lying in state.



Mark Lindley-Highfield had come in traditional mourning dress to pay his respects (The Independent)

Mark Lindley-Highfield, 47, a lecturer from Inverness, was wearing traditional mourning dress out of respect for The Queen.

“For me particularly, I wanted to be at the place where Her Majesty passed,” he said.

Speaking about the way he was dressed, he added: “I’m hoping to honour traditional views about mourning. I’m wearing as much black as I could comfortably don today, but I did think Her Majesty would want a little bit of brightness to carry forwards. Especially will King Charles III’s reign, I thought she would want us to be looking towards the future.”

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Natural England chief calls Charles III ‘most significant environmentalist in history’



King to ‘pass on the baton’ of environmentalism to his son, says head of environmental body (Getty)

ANDREW WOODCOCK

King Charles III has been hailed by a leading member of Britain’s green movement as “possibly the most significant environmentalist in history”. But Natural England chair Tony

Juniper said he expected the King to step back from public pronouncements on the environment and to “pass the baton on” to his son Prince William.

The new monarch, who has previously been criticised for “meddling” in issues such as GM crops, nanotechnology and architecture, signalled in his address to the nation on Friday that his new responsibility to avoid intervention in public debate would mean an end to campaigning for causes close to his heart. “My life will of course change as I take up my new responsibilities,” said the King. “It will no longer be possible for me to give so much of my time and energies to the charities and issues for which I care so deeply. But I know this important work will go on in the trusted hands of others.”

Mr Juniper, a former director of Friends of the Earth, said he had no doubt that William – now Prince of Wales – would continue his father’s work in using his position to promote environmental causes. The new King’s contribution to environmental protection went back as far as the late 1960s, Mr Juniper said.

“For 50 years, he’s been involved with discussions about tropical rainforests and deforestation, sustainable agriculture and farming, water, food security, climate change, the plight of peatlands,” he told BBC Radio 4’s *Today* programme. “He’s accumulated vast knowledge on these subjects and has been extremely driven and hard-working in making a contribution on it. I think everybody across the world who’s interested in these subjects sees him as really a very distinguished leader. In fact, I would go so far as to say that he possibly is the most significant environmental figure in history, considering the breadth and depth that he’s gone into over so long.”

Mr Juniper said that people involved in environmental protection all over the world were aware of the King’s influence, and that his use of his royal platform to speak out had forced those with power to pay attention.

“Anybody who’s thinking about the future of the world, sustainability and how we’re going to tackle these massive

environmental challenges [is] very well aware of his work,” said Mr Juniper. “And many people who were less engaged in those subjects were aware too, including many world leaders and the heads of corporations, who he repeatedly brought together, convening them to look for solutions together. Some of that work has been less visible, but it has been absolutely critical on some really key issues, which the world is now thankfully beginning to make some progress on.”

Mr Juniper said that the new King had made very clear in his address that he would no longer be able to continue his environmental work. But he said it was “very significant” that William had used his speech at the celebrations for the Queen’s platinum jubilee earlier this year to talk publicly about the issues of climate change, deforestation and loss of wildlife.

“It looked to me like it was a handing on of the baton, anticipating this very sad time we’re living in now, which would come one day and now very sadly, it’s come,” he said.

He also suggested that Charles may “very gently” promote environmental causes behind the scenes in future. But he added: “The role now is totally different. He has said that repeatedly, and he knows very well that he will need to work in different ways and operate differently. The impact that he’s made is absolutely huge. As we anticipate this new phase, I would, for one, just be celebrating and thanking him for the massive amount that he’s put in over so long and to such good effect. The world is in a better place than it otherwise would have been.”

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Prince William will inherit £1bn Duchy of Cornwall



William and Kate, the new Prince and Princess of Wales (Getty)

LUCY SKOULDING

Prince William is set to inherit the £1bn Duchy of Cornwall alongside his title of the Prince of Wales, following the Queen's death.

William has now become the heir apparent and the 25th Duke of Cornwall, as well as taking on the Prince of Wales title. He will automatically inherit the Duchy of Cornwall, which has been an

income stream for the man who is now King Charles for more than 50 years. This also makes Prince William one of the biggest landowners in the UK because the estate is made up of 52,000 hectares (128,000 acres).

The Duchy of Cornwall's land is not all in Cornwall, despite the name. It actually stretches across 20 different counties, including Devon, Kent, Dorset, Carmarthenshire and Nottinghamshire. Including commercial properties, forests, rivers and coastline as well as farmland, the Duchy of Cornwall comprises many different types of land. It even owns a third of Dartmoor National Park, including Dartmoor prison.

The Oval cricket ground in south London, which has been leased by Surrey County Cricket Club since 1874, is also counted among its possessions, as is a garden centre in Lostwithiel in Cornwall.



Gin from the Duchy of Cornwall estate (PA)

Waitrose shoppers might also have spotted Duchy Organic products on the shelves. From vegetables to cheese and preserves to cereal, Duchy Organic is the UK's largest own-label organic food and drink brand. The brand was founded more than 30 years ago, but it now operates separately from the Duchy of Cornwall after running into financial difficulties during the financial crisis.

The value of the duchy's net assets came to £1bn when it was all valued at the end of March this year. Most of this came from investment property assets. The duchy can be traced back around 700 years to when, in 1337, Edward III set up a private estate giving independence to his son and heir, Prince Edward.

At the time a charter decided that the eldest surviving son of any future monarch would always get the Duke of Cornwall title. The new King Charles III, who technically became heir to the throne at age three, is the longest-serving Duke of Cornwall. He took over running the estate and began receiving its full income at the age of 21, so 2019 marked 50 years of him running it.



The duchy owns a third of Dartmoor (Getty/iStock)

According to the duchy's website, the estate's revenue was used to fund Charles's "public, private and charitable activities". It adds that Charles ensured the estate was run in a way that was "sustainable, financially viable and of meaningful value to the local community".

For instance, he created the village of Poundbury on duchy land. It's a model village near Dorchester in Dorset and has now provided homes for more than 3,000 people. Responsibility will now pass to William to decide how he runs the estate and what further developments he will plan. It's proved lucrative for the now King Charles, with the duchy paying him £21m in income for the year ending March 2022, according to its annual accounts.

Charles chose to pay the top rate of income tax, 45 per cent, on his earnings after deducting official expenditure. This totalled £23m in the past year, and there will be questions over whether William decides to do the same.

There is plenty of decision-making that comes with the title too. For instance, the owner of the Cornish tin mine that was used to film the BBC's *Poldark* has just criticised the estate for launching legal proceedings against him over unpaid rent for the underground passages of the mine. The duchy owns the mine's mineral rights.

The new Prince of Wales will have plenty to negotiate by taking the duchy on.

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Million-mile monarch who was Queen to the world



The Queen was the world's most-travelled and best-known monarch (Bettmann Archive/Getty)

BEL TREW

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

She was known as the “million-mile monarch”, having visited nearly 120 countries as part of her 70 years of service. The combined travel distance is equivalent to two trips to the moon and back.

Despite royal controversies, the rise of anti-colonialist movements and the demise of the empire, the Queen managed

to maintain her position as the most recognisable and, arguably, popular ruler in modern history. Whether monarchist or republican, no one can deny that she has had an immense impact internationally.

That was only highlighted by the massive global response and outpouring of grief over the news of her passing on Thursday. President Emmanuel Macron of France summed it up succinctly by saying: “To you, she was your Queen. To us she was ‘The’ Queen”. Brazil’s government even declared three days of official mourning in her honour.

Elizabeth II carved out a unique role as a modern international monarch and retained steady admiration abroad, despite her reign including diminishing British influence on the world. When she came to the throne following the death of her father in 1952, the UK possessed more than 70 overseas territories.

At her death, the Queen was sovereign of 14 Commonwealth realms in addition to the UK – most of them sparse islands with a combined population amounting to no more than 300,000 people. But yet, to quote President Macron again, she remained *The Queen*. For 70 years, she savvily navigated a tricky and tumultuous path for the monarchy. She carefully rebranded and carried her family and in doing so maintained a place on the world stage.

No matter where she was, she could always draw a crowd, her former press secretary Dickie Arbiter says. “She got a good reception wherever she went. People turned up, perhaps not republicans but the majority did. They wanted to see the Queen,” he recalls. That was the case even after the 1999 Australian republic referendum where the country had only narrowly voted in favour of retaining the monarchy. The streets were still lined with people.



With Prince Philip walking through the crowd during her visit to New Zealand in January 1954. She was met by around 20,000 Maoris (Getty)

“She was unique globally. She was a catalyst in bringing people together. I think it is because of who she was, what she represented,” Arbiter says. “The fact she has been around for such a long time. She was a constant presence for most people’s lives. There is a healthy respect.”

This was echoed in comments by former political leaders as they reflected on her life and legacy in the wake of the announcement of her death. Kevin Rudd, Australia’s former prime minister, told the BBC World Service that he and his mother saw her as a “person of formidable unifying strength”.

John Major, meanwhile, said that she was extraordinarily and unusually well briefed on foreign affairs which had a huge impact.

All agreed that because of this she crucially saw the changing times. As Arbiter puts it, during that important trip to Australia she was careful to say in her arrival speech that the issue of a republic was something that the Australian people and “they alone should decide upon”.

Queen Elizabeth II came to power in a different world. On her 21st birthday while in South Africa, five years before she would become monarch, she famously declared that she would devote

“her life to the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong”.

By the time she became Queen – while holidaying in Kenya (a country which would go on to declare independence 11 years afterwards) – she had recognised times had changed.

Those that knew and worked with her said she saw and acknowledged the independence movement rolling across the African continent. She understood the growing need for a different kind of relationship with her beloved Commonwealth and for a new kind of monarchy, one that didn’t follow in the footsteps of her great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria, who famously never strayed any further than Europe.



Dancing with Ghana’s first president Kwame Nkrumah, in Accra in 1961 (Central Press/AFP/Getty)

Take the coronation. It was the first to be broadcast on television, which meant reaching a global audience. It is no coincidence, then, that on ascending the throne, one of her first moves was an extensive state tour of the Commonwealth.

While in New Zealand she famously invented what has now been dubbed “the walkabout”. It was the simple act of getting out of the car and meeting and greeting people in person. But it sparked countless photo opportunities, became a literal crowd-pleaser, and set the standard for monarchs across the world.

It was also not a coincidence that early on in her reign she travelled to Ghana, a former colony. There she was famously photographed dancing with Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president post-independence.

In the 1980s, she bumped heads with her then prime minister Margaret Thatcher over the PM's refusal to back stronger sanctions on apartheid South Africa following the Commonwealth heads of government summit.

“The Queen was known to be sympathetic to the African cause, not to any specific strategy or action,” Sir Sonny Ramphal, the Guyanese Commonwealth secretary-general would later recall to the BBC World Service. “But in a general sense, she understood the time had come for the ways in South Africa to change. She grew as an internationalist ... she would have understood their aspirations for freedom.”

And all along the way, she “smoothed the path” for British diplomacy and, crucially, business, says Arbiter, who accompanied her on three state visits as a member of the press. He recalls one royal trip to China where a delegation of British businessmen joined and was able to finally agree on a number of stalled contracts.

“They signed millions of pounds worth of deals off the back of the state visit,” he says. “Her loss will have a tremendous impact on the UK, her visits brought in business, created jobs and boosted the economy.”



While Elizabeth II was famously publicly quiet about her political beliefs (and emotions), she made statements in her actions, even late on in her career as she continued to travel despite her age.

In 2011 she made the first visit to Ireland by a British monarch in 100 years and laid a wreath at a memorial for those who died fighting the British for independence. As the Irish president Michael D Higgins said after her death, the Queen “did not shy away from the shadows of the past” during her trip where she “set out a new, forward-looking relationship between our nations”.

Her final trip abroad was in 2015 to Malta, when she was nearly 90 years old. After that she continued receiving foreign leaders in the UK, working right up until her final days.

Queen Elizabeth’s impact was immense but her passing may trigger a fresh push for change. Republican figures such as Adam Bandt, leader of the Australian Greens party, were quick to express their condolences but also to call for change and for debates on the monarchy’s constitutional status.

Brandt’s deputy, New South Wales senator Mehreen Faruqi, was even more direct. She sent her condolences to “those who knew the Queen” but added: “I cannot mourn the leader of a racist empire built on stolen lives, land and wealth of colonised peoples.”

King Charles III will have to tread a different path from his mother in this rapidly changing world. And he will have to live up to her colossal legacy.

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‘A symbol of continuity in a churning ocean of change’

What the late Queen Elizabeth meant to India and Pakistan



The Queen and Prince Philip meet Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi and president Zail Singh at Palam Airport, New Delhi, during a Commonwealth tour of India in 1983 (Getty)

SRAVASTI DASGUPTA

Britain's longest-serving monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, died aged 96 on Thursday at Balmoral in Scotland after 70 years as head of state. While millions mourned and tributes poured in from world leaders, there were mixed reactions to her death

across former British colonies such as India and Pakistan in south Asia.

With her ascension to the throne in 1953, Elizabeth II became the monarch of more than a dozen nations. Her seven-decade-long reign spanned a time of important transitions, not only in Britain but throughout the Commonwealth too. Known as the jewel in the crown of the British empire, India became an independent country in 1947 after more than two centuries of colonial rule, just a few years before the Queen's coronation.

The end of British rule left behind a divided nation as the new country of Pakistan was born, unleashing the world's largest forced migration, during which more than a million people died and nearly 15 million were displaced.

Reflecting on their countries' relationship with the monarchy in the wake of the Queen's death, commentators told *The Independent* that, while the modern histories of independent India and Pakistan were intrinsically related to their colonial past, the Queen in many ways represented a shift in geopolitical relations for these countries as Britain retreated from global dominance.



Miangul Jahan Zeb (with back to camera), the Wali of the princely state of Swat, presents his ministers to the Queen at the Royal Palace in Saidu Sharif during her state visit to Pakistan in 1961 (Getty)

Mridula Mukherjee, a leading historian and former chair of the Centre for Historical Studies at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, said that right from the first decade of independence the Queen was received warmly in India. This was helped by the fact that the more difficult aspects of the transfer of power had already been dealt with by 1953.

"India had already joined the Commonwealth and the manner in which India would join had already been sorted out," she explained.

The Queen was given a red-carpet welcome by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, guided by Mahatma Gandhi's cardinal principle of not subscribing to hate.

"We were interested in overthrowing the British imperial system only and did not have any hatred towards the British people," said Ms Mukherjee. "And that is how the Queen was seen in India." She added that India did not want to continue a legacy of discord, despite how the subcontinent had suffered through colonial rule.

"It is true that two centuries of colonial rule had left the economy in a bad shape: whether it was life expectancy, health or any other criteria, it was all abysmal in 1947. This was especially true of the partition and the manner in which it was done, without taking adequate care to ensure that the division took place without bloodshed. These questions remain, but they did not reflect on how the Queen herself was perceived in India."

Manisha Priyam, an academic and political analyst, said India had steadily drawn away from the influence of its former colonial power over the course of the Queen's reign, but the way she seemed to have accepted this with "grace" and continued to visit India and praise its diversity had been appreciated.



The Queen with students in a visit to New Delhi, 1961
(Getty)

“The fact that India has contested many forms of colonial power, that’s something she has been able to take with grace. Over the years, India has no longer remained reliant on the UK in terms of geostrategic alliances. To India, the Quad grouping [US, Japan, Australia and India] now matters more; in many ways, India’s ties with the US matter more. And the Queen responded to these different political transitions gracefully. So today we mourn with the UK after her demise,” she said.

Mani Shankar Aiyar, former Indian minister and diplomat, said that in many ways the Queen was a “symbol of continuity in a churning ocean of change”.

“When she became the Queen, the British empire had lost the ‘jewel in its crown’ – India – but was circling the globe in many parts of Africa and dominion status in many monarchies. She had to preside over Britain’s retreat from global dominance, and she did so with resilience and restraint,” he told *The Independent*.

As India marked 75 years of independence in August, the federal government led by prime minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced a series of events focused on ending symbols of colonial “slavery”.

On Thursday evening, as the Queen’s health deteriorated, Mr Modi was reopening the newly renovated Central Vista of Delhi,

a colonial-era landmark, and changing the name of its central boulevard the Rajpath (it was Kingsway before independence) to Kartavya Path (duty road).

Mr Aiyar said that the timing of the Queen's coronation meant she could not be regarded as one of the symbols of India's colonial past. "She became the Queen a good six years after Indian independence. Gandhi himself gifted her a piece of Khadi cloth as his gift to the heir apparent. To confuse her with the empire is to make the historical mistake that this government stands accused of."

Although India and Pakistan share a common colonial history, divided by a gruesome partition, the evolution of the two countries has been different. Qamar Cheema, a south Asian analyst based in Islamabad, said that the decades after independence had seen the rise of a new kind of political leadership in both nations.

"The elite connected with colonial powers have been castigated by the rise of new leaders. While colonialism as a political narrative is sometimes raised in rallies, it does not refer to the Queen but rather a sense of losing value for the dormant connections that some politicians had with the British empire," he said.

With the end of the second Elizabethan era, he said, it was now time for these new leaders in south Asia to leave behind their differences, which were rooted in the colonial-era legacy of partition. "There may be unfinished business, including the wars [between India and Pakistan] and the issue of Kashmir, but the focus should be on moving forward as nations."

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Family of man shot by Met demand officer's suspension



Police watchdog the IOPC has launched a murder investigation following Chris Kaba's death (PA)

REBECCA THOMAS

The family of Chris Kaba have called for the Met Police officer involved in his shooting to be “immediately suspended”. Kaba, 24, was shot in Streatham Hill on Monday following a pursuit

that saw the Audi he was driving hemmed in by two police cars in a narrow residential street.

He was unarmed, and died after a single shot was fired by a Met Police officer from the Specialist Firearms Command unit while police attempted to stop and contain the vehicle he was driving.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has launched a homicide investigation into the incident, but the family of the dead man said they were “shocked” that the decision to do so was only made on Friday. Scotland Yard said it was cooperating with the murder investigation, and that the officer concerned had been removed from operational duties.

In a statement issued on behalf of Kaba’s family, Daniel Machover, head of civil litigation at solicitors Hickman & Rose, said: “On being notified of the death of Chris Kaba, the IOPC should have immediately opened a homicide and disciplinary investigation. The family was shocked to learn on Wednesday, 7 September, that the IOPC had still not done so, and demanded a change of heart without delay.

“The family, therefore, welcome the IOPC’s decisions on Friday 9 September to open homicide and disciplinary investigations against that firearms officer, however belatedly.



Floral tributes at the scene where the unarmed 24-year-old was shot by an armed officer on 5 September (PA)

“The family now await the outcome of that investigation, but seek a charging decision in this case in weeks or a few months, not years. Public confidence in the police and our justice system requires the IOPC and CPS to find a way to make decisions in this case on a timescale that delivers justice to all concerned. Avoidable delay is unacceptable.

“In the meantime, the family demand that the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis immediately suspend the firearms officer, pending the outcome of the investigation.”

Yesterday morning, Amanda Pearson, assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, said: “The officer is not currently on operational duties due to the formal post-incident process. A senior officer will now carefully consider their work status going forward.”

Earlier this week, Kim Alleyne, 49, whose daughter Karimah Waite was engaged to Kaba, said: “He was so loved. He was so funny. He was super kind. Crazy. He was always happy. He’d do anything for you. He was a fiance, he was due to get married in five months’ time. He’s got a baby on the way that he’s never going to see.”

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British Gas owner wants to cap profits in deal over bills



Centrica is keen to be the first company to agree on Liz Truss's deal to lower the price of electricity sold to suppliers (AFP/Getty/EPA)

ADAM FORREST

Centrica is planning to voluntarily cap its profits in a deal with Liz Truss's government to help cut Britons' energy bills during the cost of living crisis. The British Gas owner is keen to sign up

to a plan for new, long-term contracts for its electricity generation, which would mean accepting lower profits in the short term.

Ms Truss is accused by Labour and the Lib Dems of siding with the energy giants after refusing to impose a new windfall tax on profits as part of her plan to freeze bills at £2,500 for two years. But part of the new prime minister's plan is to get power generators like Centrica to agree to stop pegging the price of electricity – sold on to suppliers – to soaring wholesale gas costs.

Centrica chief executive Chris O'Shea has said he wants to be the first company to sign up to a new price contract, saying talks with Whitehall officials were ongoing. "We are in this business for the long term. We're not in this business to maximise our profit this year," Mr O'Shea told *The Guardian*.

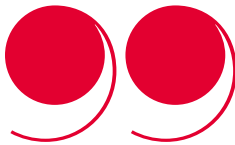
The Centrica boss added: "We are obviously in this business to create value for all of our stakeholders, customers, country [and] colleagues. But it's not about maximising this year's profits; it's about having a long-term sustainable business."

The structure of the system at the moment means all electricity is closely pegged to the price of gas, which has rocketed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February.

The UK Energy Research Centre first proposed that nuclear power stations and renewable electricity generators could sign up to new "contracts for difference" to sell their electricity at lower prices, in exchange for fixed prices over the long term. Energy UK – the body representing many of the big giants in the sector – is now keen on the idea, estimating that it could cut £18bn each year from household and businesses' energy bills.



We supply more than 8 million businesses and homes in the UK with energy – if they can't afford their energy, we don't have a sustainable business



But the plan has come in for criticism. The Resolution Foundation think tank said there was a risk of “delaying but locking in” the huge profits of the power generators.

Labour has made the same point. Shadow climate secretary Ed Miliband said long-term contracts would only “lock in” profits for electricity companies for years to come, warning that it will lead to higher than necessary household bills in future. “What Energy UK has said is we’ll accept slightly lower prices now, so we can have much higher prices over the following 15 years,” he said on Thursday. “This would be a terrible deal for the British people, a terrible deal for billpayers.”

Centrica’s chief executive said it was in the company’s interests to help bring down bills right now. “We supply more than 8 million homes and businesses in the UK with energy – if they can’t afford their energy, we don’t have a sustainable business,” said Mr O’Shea.

Ms Truss announced the energy price guarantee hours before the Queen’s death on Thursday. Expected to be paid for with a vast amount of borrowing, it will cap all household bills at £2,500 for two years, while businesses will have similar support for at least six months. No 10 has said it does not believe the mourning period will have any impact on the policy, confirming

on Friday it would not require MPs to vote on emergency legislation.

Ministers aim to sign standardised contracts with the energy suppliers within the next couple of weeks to ensure they are ready to deliver the new unit price cap from 1 October.

Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng, who has yet to set out how much it will cost the government to subsidise energy suppliers for extra wholesale costs, still needs to find a date to reveal the details of his emergency package.

The details were expected to be announced on 19 September. But the suspension of parliament for 10 days of mourning could run almost immediately into the recess for party conference season – leaving open the prospect that MPs may not return until 17 October.

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NHS accused of calling vaginal mesh victims liars

Pain experienced by patients was ignored, say campaigners

REBECCA THOMAS

HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

The NHS accused vaginal mesh victims fighting for redress of lying about pain, it has been claimed. Women suing hospitals over harm they suffered following mesh operations are being subjected to “devastating” treatment, according to Robert Rose, the head of clinical negligence at law firm Lime Solicitors. One woman told *The Independent* that she had been subjected to surveillance and accused of being “dishonest” by NHS lawyers during her six-year legal battle.

Campaign group Sling the Mesh, which represents thousands of patients, said it had received reports of those injured claiming they have been told their symptoms are psychosomatic, that their evidence is not convincing because of their mental state, or that they are lying about their pain.

MPs are set to hold an inquiry following up on the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices (IMMD) Safety Review, chaired by Baroness Cumberlege in 2020, which looked into cases of patients being harmed by mesh procedures, sodium valproate, and hormone pregnancy tests. MPs will question the government over the continued use of sodium valproate on women during pregnancy, and will seek an update from ministers over recommendations made in the IMMD review.



MPs are set to hold an inquiry following a review chaired by Baroness Cumberlege in 2020 (UK parliament)

Lady Cumberlege called for the government to launch a redress scheme for patients in order to provide them with financial support without the need for them to go through clinical negligence battles.

In a statement to *The Independent*, she said: “Both during our review and since, I have been contacted by many hundreds of women who have had their lives turned upside down following their mesh procedure. Their stories are heartbreaking. Many have lost almost everything – their job, their partner, their mobility and independence – and they live in constant pain. For too long they have been ignored or gaslighted.

“Litigation is stressful, time-consuming and difficult. These women need and deserve compassion and practical support. The harm they are suffering isn’t their fault, and it was avoidable. I and others are calling for a redress scheme to give them that support without the need to prove negligence, as we recommended in our report ‘First Do No Harm’.

“Victims of the infected blood scandal are quite rightly receiving such help without having to litigate. Women who have suffered so much for so long after mesh surgery deserve the same.”

‘Worst thing I’ve ever gone through’

Lisa, whose name has been changed to protect her identity, launched her claim in 2016, and it was settled this summer when

a judge ruled in her favour. Documents shared with *The Independent* reveal that NHS lawyers argued she was being “dishonest” about her injuries, and presented video surveillance. The judge subsequently ruled that she had not been dishonest.

Speaking about her ordeal, Lisa said: “Once they decided that I’d been dishonest, it changed from admitting liability to basically working out pain levels and stuff like that, and I had to prove that I wasn’t being dishonest. It was genuinely the worst thing I’ve ever gone through, ever. There’s not even a word that I can use to describe it, to say how it made me feel. The stress of it was just immense.

“When I found out I had been followed, it really affected me. I was very paranoid ... When you watch a video of you being recorded, and you are unaware of it. I was just mistrusting of everything.”

Lisa says that despite winning her case, she was not offered an apology by the NHS hospital, and that throughout the process, NHS litigation was “totally unwilling to mediate”. She said: “There are so many other women that are going through similar, but their cases have just been dropped. They need to believe what we’re saying. It’s like [you] literally mention mesh and the barriers go up.”

Kath Sansom, founder of campaign and support group Sling the Mesh, which represents more than 9,000 people who have been injured by mesh, told *The Independent* she had received reports from other women in the process of litigation who had been accused of lying; women whose mental state had been questioned; and others who had been told that their symptoms were psychosomatic.

She said: “Not only do you have your life shattered, but then you have to jump through all these terrible hoops in a court. It’s actually cruel. It’s all very well the government apologising, but it means nothing if you’re not prepared to compensate the women for how their lives have been shattered. So the apology becomes meaningless without redress.”

According to Mr Rose, there are several hundred cases waiting to go through the courts. He said that the attitude of NHS Resolution, which deals with negligence claims for the NHS, was a “real institutional problem”.

He said he was “astonished” when the IMMD report came out, because he had expected to see “a change of tone at the very least” from the NHS, but this had not been apparent “at all”. He said it was “devastating for his clients”, adding: “This litigation feels very different. It’s the litigation of the old days, where the parties don’t really cooperate, it’s just a war of attrition.”

An NHS Resolution spokesperson said: “We are unable to comment on individual cases but we would stress that all claims we receive are treated equally and assessed in line with the law.”

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Drought and ‘false autumn’ put wildlife under stress



The river Kennet in Wiltshire has nearly dried up in places (Getty)

HARRY COCKBURN

ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

A “false autumn” due to the heatwave and prolonged drought that is causing trees to lose their leaves, nuts to fall and berries

to ripen early could leave animals with less to feed on heading into winter.

Wildlife experts have said the extreme weather recorded this summer will significantly increase pressure on vulnerable species and has already had a devastating impact on some ecosystems, particularly where freshwater habitats have dried up. The effects of the extreme weather, made 10 times more likely by the human-driven climate crisis, are being felt up the food chain, with a huge array of species now at risk.

The RSPB's Becca Smith told *The Independent* that, although it “might take a few months or years to really understand the impact” of the drought, the false autumn was “a really visible way that people can see what’s happening”. She said: “It’s a stress response from plants – the heat means they lose their leaves and the acorns fall, and blackberries are ripening early.

“Nuts and berries in trees and hedges are foods for birds in the autumn traditionally, but they’re available now, so birds are flocking to them, which means later in the autumn and winter there will potentially be a scarcity of food.”

The full extent of the impact of the record heat and drought on Britain’s wildlife is difficult to determine yet, but experts have said the scale of this year’s extreme weather means we are now “in uncharted territory”.



A dried-up lake at Huxter Well Marsh in Potteric Carr Nature Reserve, South Yorkshire (Jim Horsfall/Wildlife Trusts)

Already the toll is evident in some areas. The Wildlife Trusts director for climate action, Kathryn Brown, told *The Independent* that what the 46 local trusts across the country had seen so far was “incredibly concerning”.

She said: “Most of the really serious impacts we’re seeing are on freshwater. Ponds have completely dried out in places all over the country, as far north as Northumberland. Of course, all the invertebrate life in those ponds – unless it can leave – dies. And all of the wildlife that can’t fly off or crawl away will have died.

“Freshwater beetles, fish such as brown trout, frogs and dragonflies have been really suffering – as well as all the freshwater wildlife, all the animals that feed on them too. We’ve seen that birds such as house martins and swifts, which feed on flying insects, have been badly affected.”

Ms Brown added that there had been a “big influx” of hedgehogs being brought to rescue centres, with numbers “into the hundreds”, because they had been unable to access water and soil-dwelling invertebrates through the rock-hard ground.

Speaking about the impacts on trees, Ms Brown pointed out that species including birch had been dropping their leaves due to stress caused by the lack of water. That had caused some of the trees to grow their leaves back, resulting in “a false spring happening”.

“The timing is completely chaotic,” she said. “It’s going to have ramifications for wildlife finding food – but are those trees going to be able to survive the winter and be able to rest themselves for next spring? It’s incredibly concerning because we just don’t know what the impacts are going to be. We’re really in uncharted territory.”



Cracked earth has replaced the freshwater habitat at West Scrape, Potteric Carr (Jim Horsfall/Wildlife Trusts)

The drought has highlighted how humans utilise natural resources and how vulnerable we are when water supplies we take for granted run dry.

Beyond hosepipe bans, the drought has worsened water quality in the UK's contaminated water courses, resulting in record fish deaths. Farmers are reporting significant crop losses, while environment experts are simultaneously warning that agricultural demands are placing strain on water availability.

Paul De Ornellas, the WWF's chief adviser on wildlife, told *The Independent* the conditions being experienced across the country "are having a serious impact on wildlife, placing many species under considerable stress".

He said: "With many of our rivers and streams running low or dry, existing pressures from abstraction and pollution are being magnified, and wildlife such as fish, invertebrates and amphibians are being lost. Pollinators such as bumblebees, already under threat from habitat loss driven by the intensification of agriculture, are also struggling to adapt to warmer temperatures."

The late summer temperatures could also cause some species of birds to push for a second brood of chicks, but a lack of food heading into winter could have deadly consequences, the RSPB's Ms Smith said.

She said people had phoned the RSPB over the summer reporting that house martin nests, made of mud, had dried up so much during the heatwave they had fallen down. The species is already red-listed (meaning it is a threatened species), so the weather “is compounding an already existing issue because they’re already in decline”.

Wildfire had caused “particularly devastating” habitat loss, especially affecting the willow tit, the UK’s most threatened resident bird, Ms Smith said. “They are quite picky about their habitat, so they need specialist restoration of that – they’ve lost more than half of what habitat they still had in the 1970s.”



The willow tit is the UK’s most threatened resident bird, and has been heavily affected by wildfires this year (Getty)

One wildfire this summer destroyed 16 hectares of restored habitat in West Yorkshire, which “has pushed us back about 30 years in terms of restoration work” for this species. “It’s devastating,” she said.

One reason why the UK’s wildlife is so vulnerable to extreme weather is the magnitude of the long-term losses inflicted on the environment in almost every part of the country.

Plenty of other countries have experienced more severe heatwaves than the UK in recent years, but a relentless campaign of human maltreatment of the environment in Britain means wildlife has already been in crisis here for centuries. The

record temperatures are merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the pressures the natural world is under.

Birds, insects, mammals, aquatic life, plants, fungi and all the profound and convoluted relationships they weave between one another have been pushed out, carved up and abandoned to the fringes of our island. Agricultural sprawl has turned heathlands, forests and wetlands into practically lifeless monocultures.

The contamination of industry and farming has poisoned the air, our watercourses and ecosystems. Once-forested uplands in areas such as the Scottish Highlands, central and northern Wales and national parks such as the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, Dartmoor and the Peak District are now almost entirely devoid of trees – barring forestry plantations – and remain heavily overgrazed, largely by sheep and deer.

In recent centuries, high levels of hunting wiped out our larger animals and, even today, staggeringly large numbers of species are routinely persecuted as “pests”. Relatively recently, red squirrels, wildcats, beavers, wolves and bears would have inhabited significant wildernesses, including large forested areas.

But the move towards industrialisation and landscape-dominating farms – while bringing numerous benefits to humans – has come at a high price for almost all other species. In the early 21st century, as the impacts of the climate crisis are felt globally, the natural world in Britain is in a deeply bleak position, with the country recognised as one of the most nature-depleted corners of the entire planet.



Scotland's overgrazed tree-less landscapes are a modern phenomenon, harbouring little biodiversity (Getty)

An analysis by experts at the Natural History Museum in 2020 concluded that “the UK has led the world in destroying the natural environment”, with human impacts – particularly from farming and transport – reducing wildlife “to a point hardly seen elsewhere”.

This was the point we were at before the UK's “unprecedented” heatwave this summer, which saw temperatures top 40C for the first time, and which has been followed by the long, brutal period of drought, which is still under way and could last into next year, the Environment Agency has warned. Things are not getting better. This week, the WWF warned that “the way we produce food is the number-one cause of biodiversity loss”.

Meanwhile, with little concerted action under way to rein in fossil fuels in Britain – and plans under Liz Truss's administration to embark on new fracking and North Sea gas and oil projects – the climate crisis means the already precarious future for wildlife in this country is likely to become graver still.

“Even marine species are impacted,” the WWF's Mr De Ornellas said, “with warming seas compounding the effects of overfishing to threaten the food supply for many of our seabirds, including puffins.

“All over the world, climate change is making extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, wildfires, floods and droughts, both

more frequent and more intense. Nature is crying out for help, yet it can also be our biggest ally in the fight against climate change. We can bring our world back to life but only if we act quickly to protect and restore nature, slash emissions and boost investment in renewable energy.”

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Remanufactured turbines putting wind in their sales

Saphora Smith visits the Scottish Highlands firm trying to make wind energy even greener with second-hand parts



Gavin MacMillan at work in the innovation centre outside Lochgilphead (Bill Bailey/Ashden)

At an innovation centre on the banks of a highland loch, a handful of workers are at the vanguard of making wind power greener. Not through employing new gadgets or gizmos but by bringing old parts back to life.

During a recent visit to the Renewable Parts workshop outside the town of Lochgilphead on Scotland's west coast, workers cleaned, stripped and reassembled parts of wind turbines under the Scottish flag. Their aim? To refurbish and remanufacture components instead of replacing them with new ones.

“What we're trying to do is bring to the wind industry or renewables the circular economy philosophy and practices,” said James Barry, the company's CEO, who dialled in for the interview remotely from his office in Renfrew, outside Glasgow. “We're a green energy source, ie wind, but we're not a green aftermarket.”

The company estimates less than 5 per cent of replaceable wind turbine components around the world are currently refurbished or remanufactured but believes there is potential for upwards of 70 per cent of those parts to be recirculated.

“That's a complete transformation of the supply chain from linear to circular,” said Mr Barry. “That's profound.”



The Renewable Parts workshop outside Lochgilphead (Bill Bailey/Ashden)

This workshop in a field overlooking the loch is leading the charge, and the business hasn't yet found another company in the world that similarly specialises in remanufacturing and refurbishing multiple parts of a wind turbine. While the UK is not a big producer of onshore wind turbines, Renewable Parts believes the country has an opportunity to become a global

leader in the remanufacturing of wind turbine components. “We’re developing an industry within an industry,” Mr Barry said.

The company, which employs some 40 people in Lochgilphead and Renfrew, was founded 11 years ago to repair wind turbine parts but supplies new parts too. Today remanufacturing represents 30 to 40 per cent of revenue, with the remainder supplying new parts. But it is the remanufacturing side that Renewable Parts expects to grow fastest.



Justin Okumu, an electrical engineer at Renewable Parts (Bill Bailey/Ashden)

In the past three to four years, the company says it has seen “exponential” growth in interest in using remanufactured parts as companies attempt to decarbonise their supply chains. In 2018, the percentage of overall company revenue that came from the remanufacturing side was less than 5 per cent; today it’s close to 40. The company mainly remanufactures parts for onshore wind turbines but has been supplying refurbished parts offshore too for the past two years.

A big part of the offering is that Renewable Parts allows companies not only to remanufacture parts but also measure the carbon they save in doing so. This data is crucial as companies attempt to measure the decarbonisation of their supply chains to meet climate goals, Mr Barry said. “The commitment to net zero – that changed everything,” he added. “You cannot be

committed to net zero if you are not serious about decarbonising your supply chain.”

Wind turbines are bulky bits of equipment that require lots of steel and concrete and have large carbon footprints. Although studies have found this footprint is insignificant when contrasted with the emissions saved from not burning fossil fuels, by reusing parts wind companies can reduce the amount of carbon they use in their supply chain.



Wind turbines line the hillside in Stirling (Getty)

By remanufacturing a yaw gearbox, for example, which is used to keep the top of the turbine facing into the wind, a company can save around 428 kg of carbon dioxide equivalent. That’s the equivalent of a return flight from London to Istanbul, and there are between four to eight yaw gearboxes on every onshore wind turbine.

In total, Renewable Parts has calculated that it has saved around 400 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by recirculating more than 3,400 parts since 2018. That’s the equivalent of more than 126 return flights from London to Perth, or the total greenhouse gases emitted a year by 63 people in the United Kingdom.

Cop 26, the United Nations climate summit held down the road in Glasgow last year, offered a further boost. Since then, the company says it has seen an uptick in the number of businesses enquiring about remanufactured parts – not for financial reasons but primarily because they’ve been recirculated.

There is interest in the environmental offering of the business from the workforce too. Renewable Parts offers high-skilled jobs in a remote part of Scotland where such businesses are few and far between. But it also trains people with no background in manufacturing or renewables.



An employee at Renewable Parts works on a yaw gearbox (Saphora Smith/The Independent)

“Up here we employ mainly on attitude,” said Michael Forbes, general manager of refurbishment engineering. “The job can be trained, getting the right people is the main thing.”

Mr Forbes, who had a boat maintenance business before joining Renewable Parts, said the workshop was set up so that going forward the company should be able to employ people straight from school. Moving people to the area was a real challenge, he

said, because second homes are used as holiday lets so the long-term rental market is small.

Those in the workshop said they were pleased to be able to work in the green sector locally. Gavin MacMillan, a 28-year-old workshop lead who comes from Oban, an hour's drive north of Lochgilphead, said the environmental aspect of the job was among the reasons why he'd wanted to work there.

He had started his work life as an apprentice maintaining heavy machinery on local quarries but said the fact that Renewable Parts helped companies cut waste and get to net zero appealed to him. "It's making the country a greener place," he said.

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Pictures of the Day



Turkish delight

A full moon sets behind the Suleymaniye mosque in Istanbul.

AP



Nailing their colours

People take part in the rainbow train and solidarity marking organised by Oslo Pride two and a half months after the mass shooting in the Norwegian capital. *Reuters*



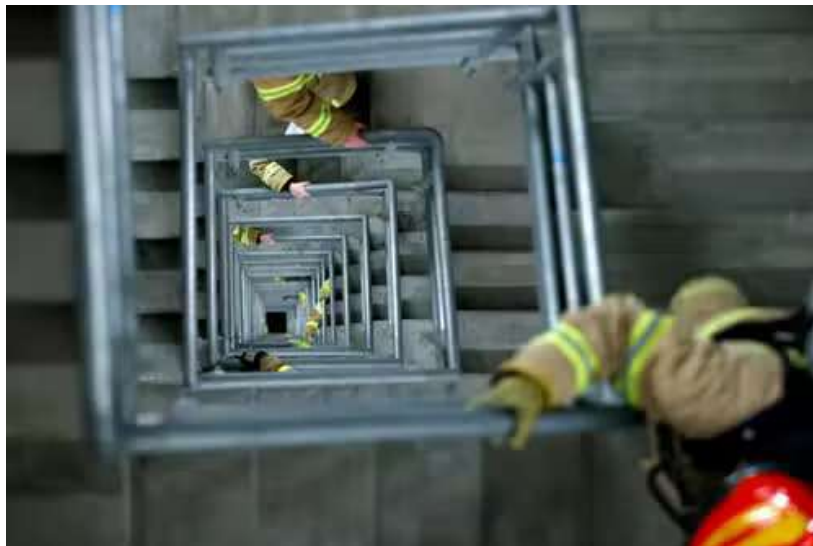
After the deluge

Victims of heavy flooding from monsoon rains take refuge as they prepare tea at a temporary tent housing camp organised by the UN Refugee Agency, in Sukkur, Pakistan. *AP*



Tutu draw

Ballet dancers perform during City Day celebrations in downtown Moscow, marking the 875th anniversary of the city's foundation. *Getty*



No fireman's lift?

Firefighters and emergency personnel take part in the Melbourne Firefighter Stair Climb at the Crown Metropol, which involves climbing 28 flights of stairs wearing 25kg of turnout gear to raise money for mental health. *EPA*

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Home news in brief



Sean Biggerstaff, left, was apparently upset by Jeremy Clarkson's view of socialists (Getty)

Harry Potter star brands Clarkson 'rancid old thug'

The Harry Potter actor Sean Biggerstaff has branded Jeremy Clarkson a “rancid old thug” after the *Grand Tour* presenter made a remark about socialists. Clarkson tweeted: “Twitter is a handy and constant reminder that socialists are disgusting people.”

The post attracted criticism from many users of the social media service, including Biggerstaff, the actor best known for playing

Oliver Wood in three films from the Harry Potter franchise. “Shut the fuck up you rancid old thug,” wrote Biggerstaff in response to Clarkson’s post. Clarkson’s tweet was seemingly made in reference to reactions to the death of Queen Elizabeth II among left-wing republicans.

Danesh died of accidental inhalation of chloroethane

The former *Pop Idol* star Darius Campbell Danesh died from “inhalation of chloroethane”, the southern Minnesota regional medical examiner’s office has confirmed. The singer and actor was found dead in his apartment, in Rochester, Minnesota, last month at the age of 41.

Autopsy documents obtained by the PA news agency listed “toxic effects of chloroethane” as well as “suffocation” as having contributed to his death. The death was ruled an accident by the medical examiner. A statement released by Campbell Danesh’s family previously said local police had found “no signs of intent or suspicious circumstances”.

Gervais’s *After Life* is ‘abysmal’, says Lee

The comedian Stewart Lee has heaped scorn on Ricky Gervais’s hit Netflix series *After Life*, a show that follows the exploits of a curmudgeonly widower (Gervais) who slowly rediscovers his lust for life.

In an interview with Rob Brydon for his podcast Brydon &, Lee discussed the merits of Gervais’s series, describing it as abysmal. “I think *The Office* is brilliant. I think Ricky’s comedy drama work is of diminishing returns to the point where it’s now abysmal,” he said. “I think it must be very sad. If you’re teaching drama or creative writing, how can you make a case for the things that make drama and creative writing good when *After Life* is a success? Because your kids could just go, ‘But none of those things happen in this!’ And yet, millions people watch it.”

Police catch rapist who absconded from prison

Police have caught a convicted rapist who absconded from prison more than three months ago. Sean Phipps, 51, failed to return to HMP Leyhill in South Gloucestershire after being released on a temporary licence to visit Bristol on 1 June. Phipps, who has convictions for kidnap and rape, was detained by police in Leicestershire at around 10pm on Friday. He was then handed over to Avon and Somerset Constabulary. His capture comes after police made two appeals to the public. In a statement, the force thanked the public for their support in sharing their appeal.

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Ukraine claims major win as Russians flee from key city



Destroyed armoured vehicles litter the road yesterday in Balakliia, Kharkiv (AFP/Getty)

KIM SENGUPTA

IN KYIV

Ukrainian forces have made one of the most significant gains since the Russian invasion, capturing the Kremlin's main military stronghold in the northwest of the country after making sweeping territorial advances in a surprise offensive.

The spectacular Russian frontline collapse on one of the main routes into the battleground of the Donbas came with the

strategically vital city of Izium, which was surrounded by Ukrainian troops after they cut off a key supply line through Kupiansk to the north, towards Kharkiv.

The ministry of defence in Moscow announced that Russian forces in Izium and Balakliia, already under Ukrainian control, were being pulled back to the separatist Donetsk People's Republic and described the move as a “regrouping” to achieve the “liberation of the Donbas”.

What is unfolding in the Kharkiv region is being seen as the most serious reverse suffered by the Kremlin since its forces were driven away from their assault on Kyiv at the start of the war, saving the capital and preventing Vladimir Putin's purported decapitation of Ukraine.

The Ukrainian attack in the Kharkiv region appears to have caught the Russian military, focusing on another Ukrainian assault in the Kherson area in the south, unaware. The retreat led to immediate recriminations back home, with demands for inquiries into why things have gone so wrong.



Russian military vehicles in Balakliia (AFP/Getty)

Kupiansk was captured yesterday, presenting the opportunity to cut off one of the main Russian logistical and communications lines on the Kharkiv front. Major rail lines come together in the town and its loss led to massive problems for the Kremlin in moving supplies.

Images have appeared in the media of a Ukrainian presence in the centre of the city. One shared by a former spokesperson for president Volodymyr Zelensky shows soldiers in front of the city hall holding up a Ukrainian flag, with a tattered Russian flag at their feet. A photo posted on Twitter by Ukrainian security service officials showed a group of troops gathered around an armoured vehicle. A caption said that Kupiansk “was and will always be Ukrainian”.

“We will free our land to the last centimetre!” it added. “Let’s go further! Glory to Ukraine!”

General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the head of Ukraine’s armed forces, wrote in a Facebook post: “We clearly know what we are fighting for and we will definitely win.” President Zelensky said in his national nightly address that troops were “gradually taking control of new settlements... returning the Ukrainian flag and protection for all our people”.

Police units, he added, were being sent to retaken settlements, and he urged residents to report any war crimes committed by Russian troops. The United Nations monitoring team in Ukraine said they had “documented a range of violations against prisoners of war” by Russians. The report also accused Ukrainian troops of “cases of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners of war”.

There were unconfirmed reports of Izium being partially surrounded in preparation for a Ukrainian assault, while Russian troops abandoned their positions. There have been also been accounts of Ukrainian troops already inside the city, but these could not be corroborated.



A man rides a bicycle past a destroyed building in Kharkiv yesterday (AFP/Getty)

The fall of Kupiansk came two days after Ukrainian troops had driven through to Balakliia, around 30 miles from Iziium, which lies on one of the main routes into the Donbas in eastern Ukraine. The Russians have seized a sizeable part of the Donbas after the capture of the towns of Severodonetsk and Lysychansk. But the two main cities, Slovyansk and Kramatorsk, which were expected to fall at one stage, remain in Ukrainian hands.

The volume of claims of Russian losses continued to rise on Russian and Ukrainian social media across the weekend. One from Ukrainian pro-Moscow blogger Yuri Podolyaka, who has 2.2 million followers on Telegram, said: “We need to be honest, the Ukrainian command has outplayed us here.” He warned of a “most serious combat defeat” unless the Kremlin managed to “stop the Ukrainian breakthrough”.

A Russian military blogger, Maksim Fomin, declared that Russian forces had been beaten. “The situation is very difficult. Let’s exhale and say that we have been defeated,” he said. Mr Fomin demanded an investigation into why the Russian forces were seemingly unprepared for the Ukrainian offensive.

Vitaly Ganchev, the Moscow-appointed head of the occupied Kharkiv region, said yesterday that civilians were being evacuated from Kupiansk and Iziium. Russia had previously moved thousands of troops from the Donbas area to counter a Ukrainian offensive towards Kherson in the south, where both sides are believed to have suffered extensive casualties.

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‘The floods have kicked off a public health emergency’

Volunteers who have set up relief camps of their own tell **Stuti Mishra** about the challenges they are facing in helping Pakistani victims amid an outbreak of water-borne diseases



Houseflies sit on the face of a boy sleeping outside his tent in Sukkur, Sindh (AFP/Getty)

Hungry children surviving by drinking contaminated water, pregnant women waiting for treatment in relief camps and elderly people unable to find life-saving medicines – these are some of the heartbreaking scenes described by the volunteers helping millions of victims of the catastrophic floods in Pakistan.

Speaking to *The Independent*, those struggling to help at the epicentre of the disaster rued the minuscule amount of aid received so far compared with the massive scale of the crisis the vulnerable South Asian nation is suffering. Official figures say the climate crisis-induced disaster has led to hundreds of thousands being forced from their homes, with estimated losses of about \$30bn (£26bn), according to the Pakistan government, and disruption to the lives of more than 33 million people – one in seven Pakistanis.

The death toll has continued to rise steadily after crossing 1,300 at the start of this week, as the rain keeps falling. The number of people injured has risen from 1,500 to more than 12,700 and the number of homes damaged or destroyed from a million to 1.6 million. But these numbers scarcely reflect the full scale of the crisis, according to the individual doctors and local organisations that have started setting up their own hospitals and aid camps in the absence of a coherent official response.

The floods have led to an outbreak of waterborne diseases such as cholera, malaria and dengue, along with snake bites, because many communities have had no choice but to live in stagnant waters.



Flood-affected people show their infected legs at Jindi village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (AFP/Getty)

“Pakistan is facing only the beginning of another wave of health-related crisis as people are basically forced to drink contaminated water from open sources, which has already

resulted in thousands of cases of diarrhoea, skin and other diseases,” Arif Jabbar Khan, country director of WaterAid in Pakistan, told *The Independent*. He added: “Malaria cases are rising so fast that that, in one district, health officials said they had run out of capacity to even test for the disease let alone treat it.”

Access to food and medical supplies has been almost entirely blocked in interior regions, where facilities were already scarce. Medical care has been in short supply in almost all areas, with 432 facilities destroyed and 1,028 partially damaged. Flood-damaged or overflowing toilets, as well as broken and unprotected water sources, have exposed people to a litany of diseases, the doctors said.

“I have never seen so many cases of diarrhoea, dengue, skin diseases and eye infections,” said Mohammad Shakil, a cardiologist who is helping the patients at a temporary relief camp set up in the small town of Charsadda in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.



Temporary tent housing for flood victims is organised by the Chinese government in Sukkur (AP)

Although makeshift hospitals and relief camps have been set up by the government, people have been unable to travel because many areas are still underwater, forcing them to wait to seek medical attention. And even those who can make it to the government shelters don't necessarily get timely access to medical supplies and treatment.

“There are dozens of people sharing the space in tents – even if you try to speak to each individual patient it takes a long time before you can check everyone,” Tariq Rashid, another volunteer doctor, said. “We have been delivering medicine packages, but it is important to carry out medical check-ups to spot diseases before they get worse,” the doctor added.

Mr Shakil and Mr Rashid are two of the many people who have stopped their routine work in other parts of Pakistan to volunteer in the worst-affected areas, and who are becoming increasingly frustrated by the difficulties of coordinating the relief efforts.



Victims line up to receive relief aid organised by the Edhi Foundation (AP)

Abid Munir, a local Pashtun leader and rights worker, said the efforts remained largely unorganised and the government was partly to blame for the chaos. “People are coming out in support and helping the victims, but no one knows how much and exactly what help is needed at each camp. Sometimes 10 people will show up to supply food, but the requirement might be a specific medicine,” he told *The Independent*.

The volunteers extending help at the camps say children, women and the elderly remain disproportionately affected by the crisis. “Children have not developed suitable immunity – they are exposed to extreme situations without access to clean drinking water and healthy food for days,” said Dr Shakil. “It is clear that they will be the most severely impacted.”

At least 450 children have died so far.



A woman sits beside her newborn baby in a UNHCR tent at a makeshift camp in Sukkur, Sindh (AFP/Getty)

The living situation in relief camps remains a cause of concern as people continue to share small spaces with their livestock in cramped conditions, the volunteers said.

“Women have told us that they feel ashamed to defecate openly as they feel their privacy is being compromised, and they are eating less to try and avoid having to do so,” Sarah Akmal of WaterAid Pakistan told *The Independent*. “Others are reporting having to use the same piece of cloth for up to seven days to manage their periods, resulting in infection and abdominal pains. All of this is having serious effects on their physical and mental health.”

The situation is particularly grave for women, with very few female doctors and midwives available at the camp. Most of the women from the region find it harrowing to share living space with strangers, particularly men. There are many women in this conservative country who would rather stay away from relief camps – and therefore lose access to medical services – as a result.

According to the United Nations Population Fund, there are 650,000 pregnant women living in flood-affected areas, including 73,000 who are expected to deliver in the next month.



People move from flooded areas to safer ground in Sehwan, Jamshoro district, Sindh (AFP/Getty)

The situation is grim for those who couldn't find space in these shelters and had to set up roadside tents, leaving them no other option but to wait for someone to bring them basic necessities. "We rushed here at 2am when the floods came. Now we're stranded," Roaan Ali, one of the flood-affected victims, told a volunteer from WaterAid.

He added: "There's no path to get out. We're helpless and in desperate need of food. We have nothing. No hut to sleep in, no tent, nothing to eat. All our houses, our cattle, our wheat are drowned and underwater."

Many had to flee the flooding with nothing, leaving their belongings to fate. "The floods came in the middle of the night. We only had time to save ourselves. We are empty-handed, sitting under the sky. No help has reached us here," lamented Samama Muhammad from Sindh province. She added that "any help that comes their way is taken by the people at the roadside".

"Helicopters are available to rescue the rich, but I had to hire a boat for 2,000 rupees to rescue my family," 25-year-old Abdul Fahim, whose home flooded overnight, told Reuters, referring to a sum equivalent to \$9.



People wade through floodwaters in the Jaffarabad district of Balochistan province (AFP/Getty)

Khalid Waqas of the Alkhidmat Foundation says that, while local NGOs are trying to fill gaps, the government needs to bolster the rescue operation. “Organisations like ours are trying our best to do what we can, but the bigger help still needs to come from the government,” he said.

Dr Shakil said the government should not stop at providing food but should also offer a holistic solution, including efforts to heal the mental trauma of flood victims. “There are people who lost everything overnight – all their hard work, everything they built over the decades. Some others have lost close family members, witnessed deaths and survived hunger. You can’t expect your work to be done with some packets of emergency relief material.”



A boy waits to receive food packets provided by local authorities (AFP/Getty)

Activists have demanded more from the government, but the nation is struggling with a crippling financial crisis. Pakistan has in recent months been facing dwindling foreign reserves and unprecedented inflation, and is coming out of political turmoil that saw its former prime minister ousted.

Meanwhile, it has faced back-to-back disasters such as heatwaves, droughts and now floods made worse by a climate crisis that the country had almost no role in creating. Officials said it would take decades for Pakistan to rebuild what has been lost. And for a large number of people, life might never be the same again.

“We have had extreme heatwaves directly followed by extreme flooding. This is climate blow upon blow. In the past week, the floods have kicked off a public health emergency and a displacement emergency,” Mr Khan of WaterAid said. “With two months to the Cop27 [UN summit on climate change], this latest climate tragedy needs to be taken as a wake-up call to the world. Pakistan cannot continue to be at the receiving end of the world’s inability to address the climate crisis. The world must take action now.”

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Actor, activist and victim of 1950s blacklist dies at 104

Marsha Hunt appeared in films such as 'Pride and Prejudice' and 'Raw Deal', turning to advocacy and humanitarian work



The actor fell into obscurity after being blacklisted from the industry during the McCarthy communist witch hunts (Getty)

LOUIS CHILTON

Old Hollywood actor and activist Marsha Hunt has died at the age of 104. Best known for her roles in films such as *These Glamour Girls*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Raw Deal*, Hunt fell into obscurity after being blacklisted from the industry during the McCarthy communist witch hunts.

Roger C Memos, the writer and director of the 2014 documentary *Marsha Hunt's Sweet Adversity*, confirmed news of her death to *The Hollywood Reporter*. Hunt died of natural causes at her home in Sherman Oaks, California.

She started her career as a model, before being signed to Paramount Pictures studio at the age of 17. Her breakthrough came in MGM's *These Glamour Girls* in 1939, in which she featured opposite Lana Turner.

A number of other well-received roles followed, including in Anthony Mann's *Raw Deal* in 1948. Hunt's career took a turn in 1947, when she and her second husband, screenwriter Robert Presnell Jr, joined an organisation opposing the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Although she would later reveal that she had no particular affiliation with communism, Hunt refused to apologise for her association with the committee, which included a stunt in which herself and other members flew to Washington, DC, to attend HUAC hearings and support creatives facing scrutiny.

In 1950, she was blacklisted from Hollywood. In the decades that followed, she turned increasingly to humanitarian work. Her screen career did endure with a handful of projects, however, including 1971's *Johnny Got His Gun*, and in TV series such as *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Among the humanitarian causes Hunt campaigned for were world hunger, homeless shelters, the legalisation of same-sex marriage and climate emergency awareness.

Starting in 1983, Hunt served as the honorary mayor of Sherman Oaks for more than two decades, having first moved there in 1946. She was married to Presnell for four decades until his

death in 1986 at the age of 71. Hunt is survived by her nieces and nephews, including the actor and filmmaker Allan Hunt.

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World news in brief



A page from a children's book that authorities in Hong Kong believe is 'seditious' (AP)

Speech therapists jailed over illustrative books

A Hong Kong court has handed down a 19-month jail term to five speech therapists for their role in the publication of children's books deemed anti-government by prosecutors. The five were convicted last Wednesday under the colonial-era sedition law, in a case criticised by rights activists as a "brazen act of repression".

Arrested in July last year for publishing three books featuring cartoons of sheep fighting against wolves, defendants Lorie Lai, Melody Yeung, Sidney Ng, Samuel Chan and Marco Fong

pleaded not guilty. District court judge Kwok Wai Kin said the therapists had to be punished “not because of the publication or the words but because of their harm or the risk of harm to the minds of children”, saying the works sowed seeds of “instability”.

In one of the books, wolves want to take over a village and eat the sheep, prompting the sheep to fight back against them. They take action like going on strike and escaping on boat, in an apparent reference to 12 democracy protesters fleeing Hong Kong by speedboat in 2020, before being captured by the Chinese coastguard. This is the first time a seditious publications case has gone to trial since pro-democracy protests began in 2019.

Five dead after boat ‘collides with whale’ in New Zealand

Five people have died and another six were rescued in New Zealand when a boat capsized after what may have been a collision with a whale. The 8.5m-long boat overturned near the coastal town of Kaikoura in New Zealand’s South Island yesterday. Identified as a charter vessel typically used for fishing, those onboard belonged to a bird enthusiasts’ group.

Officials are working to identify the victims. The six survivors have been moved to the Kaikoura health centre and one was transferred to Christchurch hospital. Though the exact circumstance leading to the capsizes is still under investigation, officials said the water was calm at the time of the incident with the assumption that the whale surfaced beneath the boat, causing it to overturn.

Police chief among 160 arrested in Florida trafficking sting

A police chief is among 160 people arrested in a sex trafficking sting operation in Florida. Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said the arrested included several teachers, a state corrections officer, two Disney employees and a former deputy chief of police from Georgia.

Sheriff's deputies executed a week-long sting called Operation Fall Haul II to find victims of a human trafficking organisation, Mr Grady told a press conference on Friday. Jason DiPrima, the deputy chief of the Cartersville Police Department in Georgia, had been in Orlando for an American Polygraph Association workshop when he tried to hire a prostitute for \$180 (£155) and a pack of White Claw, Mr Judd said. The prostitute was actually an undercover detective, and he was arrested for soliciting another for prostitution, lewdness or assignation.

He added that two victims of sex trafficking had been discovered during the operation, and they believed there could be more. Cartersville Police Department said in a statement that Mr DiPrima had resigned after being placed on administrative leave.

Pallbearer at father's funeral shot dead by officers

The family of a man who was shot and killed by law enforcement after he helped carry his father's coffin is demanding answers. Jason Arnie Owens, 37, was a pallbearer at his father's funeral on 24 August, when he was shot dead in front of 40 mourners by two plainclothes officers outside a funeral home in West Virginia. Family members claim the officers opened fire before Owens realised what was happening.

The officers arrived at the scene to enforce a fugitive warrant and called the victim's name but did not give him a chance to surrender, observers said. The US Marshals Service did not reveal why a warrant had been issued against Owens but told the news organisation he had a gun at the moment of the arrest, a claim disputed by witnesses.

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Starmer stands by Labour's authentic monarchism



Sir Keir Starmer signs the proclamation of accession of King Charles III yesterday (AFP/Getty)

JOHN RENTOUL

CHIEF POLITICAL COMMENTATOR



One of the more unfair charges against Jeremy Corbyn was that he disrespected the Queen because he wouldn't sing the national anthem.

He is presumably a republican in theory but doesn't seem to mind the monarchy in practice. He is heir to the Marxist

tradition in the labour movement, epitomised by John Wheatley's comment that he "saw no point in substituting a bourgeois president for a bourgeois king".

Wheatley's view was quoted by Clement Attlee in an essay he wrote in 1952. Attlee had just ceased to be prime minister, having lost the 1951 election, and Elizabeth had just become Queen. Attlee modestly declared that he had "taken part in bringing about a number of changes in British society", but "there is one feature of it which I have never felt any urge to abolish, and that is the monarchy".

He was a proud monarchist, with a strong pragmatic argument for his view. "A president, however popular, is bound to have been chosen as representative of some political trend, and as such is open to attack from those of a different view," he wrote. "A monarch is a kind of referee, although the occasions when he or she has to blow the whistle are nowadays very few."

In fact, his traditionalism went deeper than that, as he showed when he accepted a hereditary earldom when he retired three years later. No other Labour leader was quite so royalist, although Tony Blair tried. Blair said he was "from the Disraeli school", as he copied Disraeli's flattery of Victoria by describing Elizabeth as "the best of British". But Blair could never quite conceal his anti-establishment cast of mind, and the royal family could never quite forgive him for having saved it from the popular backlash after the death of Diana.

Keir Starmer's tribute to the Queen in the Commons on Friday was just as striking for its traditionalism. He quoted Philip Larkin's lines on the silver jubilee in 1977: "In times when nothing stood / But worsened, or grew strange / There was one constant good: / She did not change." That is a stark statement of explicit conservatism – not only that but a statement by an avowed Conservative.

Never mind that Larkin was writing of a time when, under a Labour government, the country seemed to him to be going to the dogs, and that he regarded the Queen as one of the few fortifications against anarchy. Starmer may have wanted to

suggest that there are echoes of the Seventies economic crisis today, and that the tables have turned between the parties.

Some of Starmer's poses have been crude but this week allowed him to seal his reputation as a monarchist in the Attlee tradition



In any case, he went on to use the Queen's legacy to make his own statement of deep conservatism: "The country she came to symbolise is bigger than any one individual or any one institution. It is the sum total of all our history and all our endeavours, and it will endure."

It is a sentiment that fits with Starmer's patriotic theme, set out consistently since he took over from Corbyn. Corbyn was personally polite about the Queen, and his tribute to her was touchingly genuine. "I enjoyed discussing our families, gardens and jam-making with her," he said. "May she rest in peace."

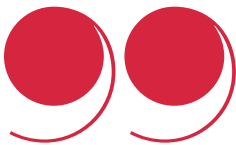
One of his best moments in the 2017 election campaign was when Jeremy Paxman pointed out that there was nothing in Labour's manifesto about getting rid of the monarchy. "Look, there's nothing in there as we're not going to do it," Corbyn said. When he was pressed, he said: "It's certainly not on my agenda and, do you know what, I had a very nice chat with the Queen."

But Corbyn's politics had become, by the time of the 2019 election, a problem with voters who regard themselves as patriotic, and particularly with the kind of working-class voters with whom Attlee instinctively associated. Those voters could no longer be deflected by chats about jam from Corbyn's hostility to the establishment, including its conventional views on national security.

Hence the flags in Starmer's videos and his photo opportunities with soldiers. Some of Starmer's poses have been crude, but this

week allowed him to seal his reputation as a monarchist in the Attlee tradition. He is fortunate in his new opponent, too. Whereas before this week, the Conservatives might have been tempted to attack him for that video in which he slyly boasts about being made a Queen's Counsel, "which is odd since I often used to propose the abolition of the monarchy", they can't now.

Not because Starmer is now a KC, a King's Counsel, but because Liz Truss, too, was an abolitionist in her youth. That balances the two main parties in a way that Attlee would have appreciated. He felt that there should be no difference between the parties on the rules of the game. He was right – if the monarchy evolves, that should happen without being driven by party politics. By returning Labour to its monarchist tradition, Starmer has ensured that politics can be fought on a level playing field.



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Allowing children to attend a funeral is a personal decision



The images of the two young princes forced into the spotlight as they joined the procession for Diana, Princess of Wales divided the nation (AFP via Getty)

VICTORIA RICHARDS



Should you ever take children to a funeral? For some, the answer comes easily. For others, it's more complex; driven by the age or relative

emotional maturity of the child, perhaps the circumstances (or closeness) of their loss.

When the answer is “no”, it may be driven by the well-intentioned desire to protect children from grief, to cushion them from the perceived trauma of witnessing their parents in pain. Or it might simply be because your own emotions are so raw, so overpowering, you can’t see past them to imagine being able to look after someone else’s feelings too.

There is no right or wrong answer – grief is always profoundly personal. We have yet to see if all of the Queen’s 12 great-grandchildren will attend her funeral, rumoured to be next Monday – but royal or not, it will be a hard call for their parents. All eyes will be on the new Prince and Princess of Wales, Wills and Kate; Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.

Prince William and Prince Harry will no doubt remember (and may still be significantly affected by) their memories of their mother’s funeral – as are the rest of us. The images of the two young princes forced into the spotlight as they joined the procession for Diana, Princess of Wales divided the nation. And they’ll haunt us forever.

I went to a funeral last week and had asked if the deceased’s grandchildren might be there. Their mother, completely understandably, said no – she felt that for under-10s the experience would be “too hard”; for both the family giving the eulogy and the kids themselves.

Another close friend who’s experienced recent grief said she felt conflicted about the idea of taking her very young children, who are similar ages to Prince George and Prince Louis, to a burial – and she reminded me how hard it can be to talk about death with someone small, for whom the concept is surreal, unimaginable.

“Mine are struggling to handle the idea of death at the moment,” she said. “They’ve taken this bereavement very badly. The thing they seemed most disconcerted by was my sadness – they’ve seen me cry before but not like this.

“They’ve seemed out of sorts since the news and don’t seem to understand how to react. Sometimes they’re smiling and laughing, other times they’re saying how sad they are and what they remember about the person. When I first told my youngest, she was angry with me – she told me I shouldn’t have told her.

“Since then, they’ve both made paintings for the family; completely off their own backs. My eldest keeps asking me if I’m OK and if I’m sad. I’m pleased they saw me cry and know that it’s OK for big people to have feelings too. I think it helps to validate them feeling sad and openly crying to see me doing the same. It’s been really interesting to see how they’ve responded to it.”

When my daughter’s great-grandmother died (the pair were four generations apart, yet the best of friends) she asked if she could come to the funeral



I also have kids of a similar age to the littlest royals – I wrote recently about Prince Louis’s first day at his new school when he refused to hold his father’s hand. When my daughter’s great-grandmother died (the pair were four generations apart, yet the best of friends) she asked if she could come to the funeral.

She was six and I did ponder whether or not it would be “appropriate” but in the end, decided to trust my child. If she wanted to go, I wanted her to be there – and I knew her great-grandmother would have loved the idea. She watched the coffin being carried in and she was fascinated: “Where are they taking her now? What will happen next?”

Four years later, she grieves openly still. She keeps a photo of her great-grandmother in her bedroom and will occasionally start crying out of the blue – when I ask why, she tells me it’s because she misses her. She made such a profound impact on

her life that I'm glad she was able to be part of the process – the funeral and mourning too. It might not be the decision all parents take, but it was the right one for my child.

And that's what is most important here, and can't possibly be judged or berated: we will see whether or not Wills and Kate decide to let Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis attend the memorial for the Queen, and whether Harry and Meghan think it's right for Prince Archie and Princess Lilibet to be there too; not to mention the Queen's seven other great-grandchildren: Sienna, Savannah, Mia, August, Isla, Lena and Lucas.

Regardless of whether they do or don't, it will be the right thing to do. The royal family may be worlds apart from the rest of us in terms of wealth and ceremonial duty, but they're still human. They're people. They hurt and they mourn and they grieve and they love and they rage and they question and they remember and they deserve the chance for closure and to say goodbye, if they want to – or to process it in private – just like the rest of us.



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Leave Harry and Meghan alone, they are mourning too



The criticism they receive is always wrapped up in faux concern for the Queen (PA)

JAMES MOORE



The irony of a lifelong supporter of a republic writing a column cheerleading for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex is not lost on me. The thing is, I've never much liked bullies. Or bullying. And there has been a lot of that directed at the Sussexes.

The message from the English right when it comes to the Queen is: “Play nice or else you’ll get a brick through your window. However, if you want to let off a little steam, feel free to unload on Harry and Meghan. Throw as many stones as you want. Tip as much bile as you can find.”

And my, how they’ve done that. A tweet from Petronella Wyatt, the journalist, broadcaster and former paramour of Boris Johnson, summed it up: “May God forgive Harry and Meghan for causing the Queen so much pain, for I never shall.” Really, Ms Wyatt? Please. They need your forgiveness about as much as they need subscriptions to the tabloids that use them to sell copies.

Seriously, what have they ever done beyond escaping that kind of ugliness in favour of the celeb life in California? For that cardinal sin, they’re depicted as the Cersei Lannister and Joffrey Baratheon of “The Firm”. Never is there the slightest allowance made for the fact that Harry lost his mother at a young age. Never is it remembered that instead of being allowed to grieve in private, Harry was thrust into the spotlight, suited and booted and trotted out to perform for the crowds and the world’s media.

Just take a look at pictures from the time. They’re actually quite painful to see. If you possess a shred of empathy, they will make you sad (and maybe also angry) at the way he was forced into that position.

Let us not forget that he lived in a house full of tension before that, too. Take it from me, I know what it’s like living through a collapsing marriage at a young age. It leaves scars. They run deep. Goodness only knows what living through a collapsing royal marriage in the full glare of the public eye was like.

Then Harry falls in love and marries, according to certain sections of the media, the wrong woman – who herself had to take some licks growing up.

Then she dared to fall in love with a royal prince, and things got ugly fast. Burn her! She's a witch!



Shall we mention the R word – racism – now? Yes, let's. The criticism Harry and Meghan receive is always wrapped up in faux concern for the Queen. They've hurt the sovereign by slinging their hook and now they're making a podcast and spending days at the beach with their kids or having dinners at fancy eateries with celebs. How dare they.

The hard truth, of course, is that much of this criticism boils down to the fact Meghan is mixed race. That would always make her fair game to certain people, no matter what she did. But then she dared to fall in love with a royal prince, and things got ugly fast. Burn her! She's a witch!

Those who try to deny the role that Meghan's race plays in all this are lying. California? Hell, if it had been me I'd have found an island in the middle of the Pacific, built a house and covered the roof in a banner displaying the classically British two-finger salute.

Derrick Johnson, the CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in sending his obligatory condolences, singled out the couple "who have become dear friends and allies in our fight for a more just future".

Harry and Meghan have always been my favourite members of the royal family, as much because of their staunch haters as for anything they have or haven't done. They have all the right enemies. They are despised by all the worst people.

Derrick Johnson's statement indicates they have some of the right friends too, quite apart from the fact that common decency says they deserve our condolences as much as any other royal.

Harry has lost his grandmother. That is a painful event. He and his wife have my sympathy.



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Celebrate the Queen's life by dancing, not shutting down



The old-fashioned idea of mourning is out of date (Getty)

ADAM BLOODWORTH



What a day it had been: after crowding around our news desk watching Huw Edwards on the BBC at 6.30pm with a dozen other journalists in utter silence (trust me, we're a hard bunch to quieten), I had roared into central London to mourn the passing of the Queen.

A Londoner all my life, the only other time I've seen Piccadilly Circus disrupted like it was last Friday was during the depths of the pandemic. This time, what must have been a 30m-wide high-definition image of the 96-year-old had replaced the frenetic Coca-Cola adverts typically on the giant billboard. "Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II," it read. "1926-2022."

My friends left a nearby Soho bar to stand quietly next to me and we took in slow, deep breaths. Being a Queen sympathiser is perhaps my least progressive opinion; I respect those that think the monarchy should be over and done with, but my heart has deep admiration for anyone that says at a young age their whole life will be dedicated to the service of others. I believe she felt that way, and the fact that she remained in the same job through a time period spanning Churchill to Coldplay is astonishing.



Piccadilly Circus (Adam Bloodworth)

Once, aged 17, I even got to have my "moment" with Her Maj. I broke royal protocol and asked the Queen if I could shake her hand at an appearance in Cambridge. She wasn't doing a walkabout, but we bought flowers from the shop and, on leaving, the Queen spotted our bouquets and invited us over. She was generous and questioning and ordinary, and it made me respect her more. You shouldn't ask to shake the Queen's hand, we learned later, but my friend did and she was relaxed in her decision to let us and unbothered by our asking.

All this is to say that last night I had wanted to mourn properly, but once we'd wandered away from Piccadilly Circus, our heads turning occasionally back to the image of the Queen for a final glance, we were headed to Heaven, London's biggest LGBT+ nightclub. I'd thought watching drag queens performing live would have been an incredible experience; these performers often respond to the latest news cycles with their live shows and, for me as a queer person, drag is essential creative expression that I live by. It's the first thing I turn to for responses to anything, be it good news or a tragedy.

But Heaven was closed: a small sign on the door below the colourful sign read that the decision was taken "as a mark of respect". It wasn't just me that hadn't checked social media to hear the club was shuttered. I spent a while talking to other people who rocked up and had to head home disappointed.



Mourning shouldn't stifle creativity or expression, especially of minority groups (Adam Bloodworth)

In principle, the age-old idea of mourning is a good one: to take time to respect the life of another before we collectively move on. But it shouldn't stifle creativity or expression, especially of minority groups that need safe spaces such as queer clubs in which part of the culture is intrinsically about creating art and performance as a means of survival, no matter how hard the times get.

I assume Heaven runner Jeremy Joseph made this decision himself, but many other venues across the country will undoubtedly feel pressured into closing temporarily, all the while hemorrhaging money to fit in with the status quo, which isn't fair on them. Meanwhile, press releases are pouring in announcing postponements of TV shows and events, some of which are charitable. And some of the mourning processes of restaurants and bars can feel performative; journalist Maddy Mussen noticed this, sending a tweet joking that Pizza Express would "only be serving British food" in honour of the Queen.

The last time there was significant public mourning on this scale was for Princess Diana, and now we look back and acknowledge that elements of that period were wrong. Princes Harry and William walking behind their mum's coffin in their boyhood was not right.

Can we modernise the old-fashioned idea of mourning and make it work for our 21st-century values? We're not Victorians, and it's no longer crazy to accept the idea that being entertained and showing deep respect aren't mutually exclusive. Anyway, queer culture is all about respecting one another: there may be sly jokes, but really these days I don't believe London's drag queens would have seriously dragged the Queen. There would have been jokes, but in good taste.

On the other side of the alleyway to Heaven last night, the Players bar was open. It's a British institution that's famous as the watering hole for politicians, especially on Thursday nights before they head home from Westminster to their constituencies. Yesterday evening I went inside and, with the

venue at full capacity, I gathered around the bar's piano where the pianist was playing "God Save the King". With a pint, and swaying drunkenly along with dozens of strangers, I bellowed those most unusual of lyrics. It felt like the epitome of modern mourning.



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A lonely future for Andrew, once the Queen's favourite



Whatever protection and support his mother provided to the Duke of York is gone (Getty)

SEAN O'GRADY



What to do with the King's brother? The future of Prince Andrew isn't the most pressing concern of the nation – or even the royal family – but for as long as the nation's constitution and identity is tied

up with the Windsor family, Andrew will present a conundrum, as well as a permanent, ineradicable embarrassment.

The late Queen was often said to be especially fond of Andrew and keen to see him rehabilitated even in his darkest hours. She was said to have paid his legal bills in the Virginia Giuffre case. She sometimes chose to make those little public gestures of loyalty to him, so we would see him looking after her at Prince Philip's memorial service or travelling next to her in a car.

Such was her prestige that these misjudgements passed without much criticism. He was, after all, her son, not just some random celeb. However, whatever protection and support his mother provided to the Duke of York is now gone.

Prince Andrew faces an even lonelier future now his brother is King. In recent years, Charles and his close team – including Prince William – made no secret of the fact that they wanted The Firm slimmed down. There would be no official role, sovereign grant funds or even royal money for the Duke's daughters, Beatrice and Eugenie.

Whatever their merits, they would not be high-profile “working royals”. Even before his fall from grace, Andrew too was looking towards a more peripheral status. Now, with the practical loss of his “HRH” and his various charitable and military patronages, he looks set to be rather brutally ostracised.

As well as losing his mum, Andrew has lost his greatest ally in the royal court. It has to be said, though, that it was the Queen, always putting the institution first, who made him “step back” from almost all of his public roles in 2019.

The difference between his brother, the King, and his mother, the late Queen, was that she clung to the hope that a suitable legal outcome and the passage of time might gradually allow Andrew to be rehabilitated. He himself, as so often the victim of delusion, voiced the idea in his interview with Emily Maitlis, that he might do charity work with the victims of sexual exploitation. He wasn't being ironic.

We should always remember that it is Andrew, and no one else, who's responsible for his downfall



So he's disgraced, and no path to restoring his reputation has been discovered. He was, once, extremely popular – when he married Sarah Ferguson in 1986 he was something of a dishy idol. No longer. There is no way back.

That's because he can't admit any offences, in the spirit and the terms of the legal settlement, and thus any talk of repentance is impossible. In a way, he is trapped by the outcome of the Giuffre case. In an ideal world he'd not be seen in public at all, at least in any official capacity.

But even though most of his roles, titles and grandiose uniforms are gone, he is still the King's brother, the future King's uncle and the late Queen's second son. In other words, he is still a member of The Family, even if no longer The Firm.

So he will probably make a low-key appearance at the Queen's funeral, he might well appear as a sentry at the lying in state, as is traditional, and, possibly, at his brother's coronation. That, though, will pretty much be it for the prince. Obscurity beckons – and more time with his family (including his ex-wife) and playing golf.

Like the Duke of Windsor before him, Mark Phillips, Sarah Ferguson – and, arguably, Prince Harry and Meghan now – the royal family can be ruthless about marginalising those it finds inconvenient. Only Princess Diana, with her superstar charisma, didn't “go quietly”, as she put it, and couldn't be made to. She was the exception, though.

In the coming years, Andrew will be an increasingly shadowy, ghostly figure, glimpsed only at funerals, at which point younger members of the population will ask who he is. King Charles has

a tough enough job as it is living up to his mother's reign. He doesn't want distractions. But we should always remember that it is Andrew, and no one else, who's responsible for his downfall.



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Brands cashing in on death to promote products is grim



Within an hour of the announcement, brands tweeted, posted and emailed their thoughts and prayers to everyone they could, in an awkward attempt at sincerity (Getty)

EMMA FLINT



The death of the Queen was always going to divide the nation. From royalists who romanticise every scrap of history to the anti-monarchists who want to abolish the crown, and all those in between who sit on the fence of indifference. It was always destined to be an inescapable and domineering historic

moment, one that came into effect on 8 September when Buckingham Palace announced the Queen's death.

But what a lot of us didn't see coming was unity. Not in what the Queen symbolised – that's still a discourse waging on social media – but in our disbelief at the absurdity of brand tributes that swamped the internet. Given the gravity of the situation, we knew that an outpouring of condolences would come from far and wide, however, we anticipated them to come from notable figures, like the president of the United States, not the British Kebab Awards.

Within an hour of the announcement, brands tweeted, posted, and emailed their thoughts and prayers to everyone they could, in an awkward attempt at sincerity. It didn't land well. Among the outraged were those who sat in comical disbelief, unable to look away as more cringeworthy condolences came flooding in. They say the devil works hard, but these brands worked even harder to make sure they were included in what can only be described as the most capitalist form of fomo.

Hundreds of threads detailing the most bizarre tributes began to appear, offering us a collective space to ask what the hell was going on. The word dystopian has been used a lot lately, but this is an undeniably perfect example – death was commodified. No matter how many brands want to deny it, they marketed death in what appeared to be an attempt to gain profits. Just look at the way Funko Pop made sure to use a Pop figure of the Queen and a corgi to pass along their respects in a tweet that's since been deleted. Why? A simple message would have sufficed. Though, in all honesty, silence would have been just as acceptable, if not better.

Our society is governed by the belief that silence is akin to inaction. Although the corporate machine was definitely at work that day, so too was this ideology that to not post is somehow disrespectful. Yet, silence can be deafening. It's a powerful tool that recognises how ineffective words can sometimes be. It's noting the fact that paying lip service is arguably more disrespectful than silence ever could be. Seeing a chihuahua

dressed in a Beefeater costume, while ridiculously adorable, doesn't strike the right tone.

It's truly bizarre to think most of us will remember the Queen's passing, not because of how moved we were (if we were at all), but because we saw Crazy Frog tweet "RIP The Queen". Never did I imagine one of the most annoying remnants of the Noughties would have such a profound place in the history of a monarch's death. Yet, here we are.

The whole culture of media and marketing requires brands to jump on trending news topics. The problem is, most brands don't think about the ethics behind it



The onslaught, thankfully, has slowed. But the absurdity it commanded still remains, along with the question: was this clever marketing or grim opportunism? Let's not pretend like some of these brands didn't shamelessly have their logos all over those RIP emails, or that they didn't use their own products (I'm looking at you, Playmobil) to say their goodbyes.

As someone who sits on the very fence of indifference, which I mentioned earlier, I'm not particularly angered by these peculiar tributes. Despite this, I do feel that they're fantastically horrific in their brazen messaging. It created a curiosity in me, a need to better understand what those in business thought of these questionable marketing decisions.

"As a business owner I have strong feelings about this as I think it's important for businesses to take the decisions that work best in line with their values and their audiences," shares Yinka Ewuola, an independent business owner. "I've seen some really inspiring business emails in the last 20 hours (albeit from small businesses as opposed to big ones), and sent one myself, because

behind the campaigns are real people with some real (and complex) emotions.”

Ewuola makes a valid point; however poorly these posts have been received, they’ve come from real people. Nevertheless, as Ewuola also mentions, businesses need to marry their decisions with their values, which is arguably where so many brands have failed.

It becomes a matter of ethics, as Pearl M Kasirye, head of PR at Pearl Lemon, explains. “Brands pushing marketing within an hour of the Queen’s death are expected. The whole culture of media and marketing requires brands to jump on trending news topics. The problem is, most brands don’t think about the ethics behind it. A lot of it leaves a poor taste in my mouth, to be honest.”

In some respects, there is no steadfast right or wrong answer here – marketing is, and always has been, divisive in its execution. Still, the thought (or lack of) behind these tributes comes from a warped adaptation of social etiquette, where brands use behavioural codes of so-called “polite society” and lace them with self-advancement. It’s the perfect encapsulation of the capitalist machine.



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Mea culpa: it's a fallacy to say the sun has got his hat on

John Rentoul's regular round-up of our errors and omissions



Lord Deben (left) with John Bercow: only one of them is an ex-Conservative (PA)



In an editorial about the implications for the government's target of net zero carbon of the appointment of Jacob Rees-Mogg as business secretary, we said: "He has cast doubt on anthropomorphic climate change..." We meant "anthropogenic", as more than one reader wrote to let us know.

“Anthropomorphic” means treating things such as animals as if they were humans. We did not mean that the climate is like a person – that is a literary fancy known as the pathetic fallacy. “Anthropogenic”, on the other hand, means that something has been generated by humans.

The lesson of this confusion is not that we should use the right word, although that would obviously be preferable, but that we should not use long, technical and obscure words that are similar to other long, technical and obscure words. I can see why we wouldn’t want to say “man-made climate change”, but we could have said it in a simpler way, such as: “He has expressed doubts that human activity is changing the climate.”

Nothing so ex as an ex: Staying with climate change, we reported the warning to the new government from the chair of its independent committee on the subject, and commented: “Lord Deben, the former John Selwyn Gummer, is an ex-Conservative environment secretary, and no one’s idea of a violent radical.” Thanks to Roger Thetford for pointing out that Lord Deben is still a Conservative. I think he should have been described as “a Conservative former environment secretary”. To avoid using “former” twice, instead of calling him “the former John Selwyn Gummer”, we could have said something like, “better known as John Selwyn Gummer”.

Sign off: In a report of the water contamination in Jackson, Mississippi, we said: “President Joe Biden has signed off on an emergency declaration...” Mick O’Hare asked if this meant he had signed it, or just sent an email. I assume that if it was a presidential declaration, we could say that he signed it.

In and around: Thanks to Norman Stockman for writing in support of my campaign against “amid”. We used it a lot last week. We said that share prices of house building companies “have been dropping significantly in recent months amid worries of a housing market squeeze”. That’s “because of”.

In another report, we said: “Councils are bracing themselves for an influx of homeless refugees amid warnings that the government has ‘no plan’ for the continuation of its flagship

Homes for Ukraine scheme.” That’s “as the government was warned that it...”

We even started a motor racing report with it: “Amid a turbulent season where Mercedes have been so far off the frontrunners ... Sunday’s topsy-turvy Dutch Grand Prix will have stung right where it hurt.” That’s “in”.



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Where power really lies

John Rentoul explores what the privy council reveals about the inner workings of government and how it has evolved



Liz Truss yesterday signs the proclamation of accession of King Charles III as Camilla and William look on (AP)



The accession council that proclaimed Charles king is a good example of the trend in constitutional history for powerful bodies to expand and, as they expand, to lose their power, and to be supplanted by smaller bodies which then start the cycle again.

The privy council was originally the monarch's closest advisers, those trusted to give confidential (private) advice. Its members, acting with the sovereign's authority, often wielded great power.

As its numbers grew, though, it was supplanted as the main decision-making body of government by a sub-committee of the council called the cabinet.

As membership of the privy council is conferred for life, it now has 500 members and has become too large for all its members to attend events such as the proclamation of a new monarch. Although more important privy counsellors were invited automatically, the rest had to put their names into a ballot to attend the ceremony.

Meanwhile, the cabinet is following the same path, as its meetings are increasingly for show rather than for actual deliberation. Boris Johnson as prime minister hastened that progress by more frequently inviting the TV cameras to film the start of cabinet, when he would address the assembled ministers as if they were at a public meeting.

It has been a long time, of course, since the cabinet has been a day-to-day decision-making body. The important decisions have long been taken by smaller ministerial sub-committees (sub-committees of a sub-committee of the privy council). When disagreements cannot be resolved, they usually go to the prime minister for arbitration rather than to the whole cabinet.

Dominic Cummings, Johnson's former chief adviser, argued that real power lies not even with ministerial committees, but with relatively junior civil servants in 10 Downing Street, the prime minister's private secretaries (that "private" word again). There may be some truth to that in the sense of influence over the daily flow of information and of small decisions, but in recent decades the most important power has tended to lie in informal groups of senior ministers including the prime minister.

Tony Blair's government was dominated by the duumvirate of Blair and Gordon Brown, his chancellor. In the coalition there was a more formal group of four ministers called the quad, consisting of David Cameron, George Osborne, Nick Clegg and Danny Alexander. That was a structure that was revived during the pandemic, with a quad made up of Boris Johnson, Rishi Sunak, Matt Hancock and Michael Gove.

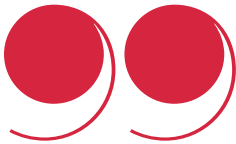
For the last year of Johnson's government, that grouping had broken up and was not replaced, possibly contributing to the prime minister's weakness.

Now we have a new prime minister, who has expanded the cabinet again, with 23 full members and eight ministers entitled to attend, making a total of 31 – requiring the extension to the coffin-shaped table. But we will soon find out who will be in her inner, “private” cabinet wielding the real power.

Yours,

John Rentoul

Chief political commentator



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The Queen was always going to die with her boots still on



Queen Elizabeth II was always going to die with her boots on. Retirement was akin to that dreaded word “abdication”. So on she went right to the end. One prime minister in, one out. All in a day’s work. She was a part of us all, and she’s taken that part with her. Something is missing now that she’s gone.

Lynn Brymer *Kent*

I listened to Charles’s first speech as King and now, on reading the text, feel that it was perfectly pitched. It was humble, sincere in his love for his mother, and this shone through.

This has been a tumultuous week but I feel the monarchy is in good hands with him and his Queen consort, Camilla, at the helm. In the end it all came rather unexpectedly, although we all knew the Queen was struggling with her health.

I am so pleased that she was there to enjoy her platinum jubilee celebrations and now a new royal chapter begins with a tight, fully committed entity who will support each other during this transition, as the Queen would have wanted.

Judith A Daniels *Norfolk*

In common with many others who have limited enthusiasm for the institution of monarchy, I have enormous respect for the late Queen. She served the nation diligently and well throughout her

70-year reign. She will be greatly missed. Her loss is bound to be keenly felt by her grieving family. Of course we must offer them our sympathy.

However, although we all know a lot about her, most of us did not know her personally. She lived long and well and, as far as we know, had not a bad end, with her family around her. Surely, therefore, her death should be regarded not as a tragedy but as the natural and timely culmination of a good life.

Let us all rejoice for you Ma'am!

Susan Alexander *Gloucestershire*

The arched double rainbow appearing over both Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, just before the passing of Queen Elizabeth II was announced, was indeed a genuine phenomenon. It appears as though the heavens above were all lit up for the arrival of Her Royal Majesty. As one era ends, a new one begins as King Charles III ascends the throne. God Save the King.

JoAnn Lee Frank *Florida*

Crunch time

With King Charles announcing he will be spending less time on some of his activities, who is going to ensure the supply of my Duchy Original biscuits?

G Forward *Stirling*



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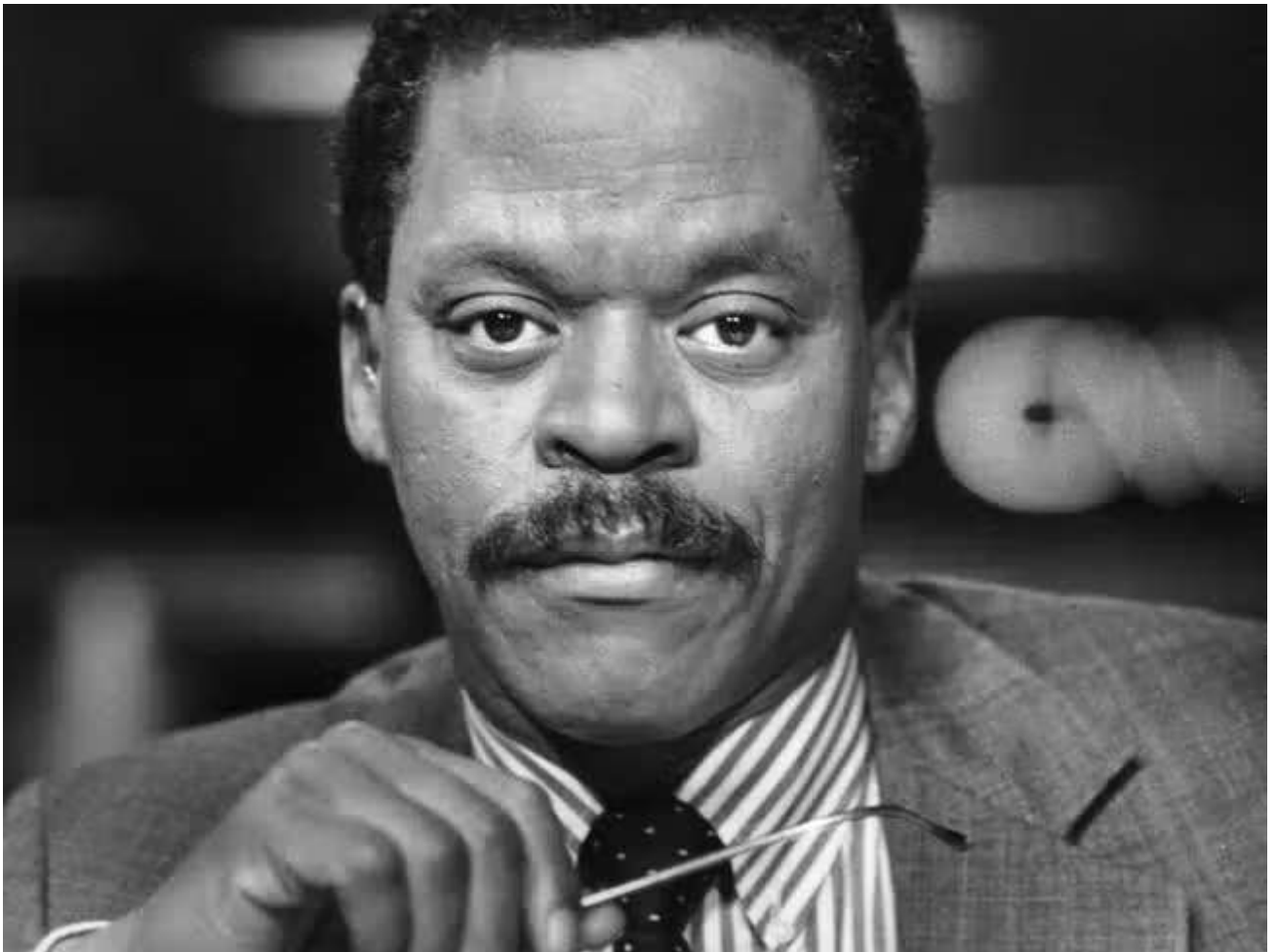
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Obituaries



Unflappable journalist and CNN's first chief anchor

Bernard Shaw's riveting Gulf War coverage from Baghdad helped elevate the cable network to global prominence



Shaw in 1997: 'I saw it as perhaps the last frontier on television,' he said of his move to CNN in 1980 (The Washington Post)

GLENN RIFKIN

Bernard Shaw, a journalist who left network TV in 1980 for the uncertainty of anchoring at the first 24-hour cable news network – CNN – and whose steady-under-missile-fire coverage from Baghdad during the Persian Gulf War helped elevate the outlet to global prominence, has died of pneumonia aged 82.

With his unflappable demeanour and sombre intonation – his heroes were broadcasters Edward R Murrow and Walter Cronkite – Shaw was credited with bringing professional polish to an experiment initially laughed off as the “Chicken Noodle Network” for challenging the Big Three networks for news dominance.

A one-time US marine who got his professional start in Chicago news radio, he joined CNN after covering Washington for CBS and reporting for ABC from Latin America, where he was one of the first journalists on the ground following the 1978 Jonestown massacre in Guyana.

Restless for an anchor job, Shaw took his chances at CNN. Atlanta business and sports mogul Ted Turner, the network’s founder, had gambled on round-the-clock coverage of global events at a time when the major networks offered half-hour evening newscasts and audience appetite for constant news updates was untested.

The job seemed risky at best when Shaw took a salary cut to sign on as a Washington-based anchor. But over the next 21 years, he became vital to CNN’s credibility and the reputation it cultivated for breaking news. He was also one of the most prominent Black journalists on TV before relinquishing the anchor seat in 2001. (In 1978, ABC named Max Robinson the first African American as co-anchor of a major network news broadcast.)

Shaw’s tenure was not without controversy. As moderator of a 1988 presidential debate, he provocatively asked Democratic candidate Michael S Dukakis, the Massachusetts governor, if he would favour capital punishment for the killer if his wife, Kitty Dukakis, were raped and murdered.

Dukakis's dispassionate response to the hypothetical – flatly restating his opposition to the death penalty – was said to have been a factor in his defeat to his Republican rival, Vice-President George HW Bush.

Shaw acknowledged that some viewers and even fellow journalists thought the question “ghoulish and tasteless”. Dukakis called it “inappropriate” and “outrageous”. But he was unruffled, insisting politicians deserved tough questions.

“I realise that in asking that kind of question, that it would arouse emotions, but I meant the question to Dukakis to be a stethoscope to find out what he was feeling on this issue,” he told *The Washington Post* at the time. “Bush had been beating Dukakis severely about the head and shoulders, charging he was soft on crime. Many voters perceive seeing and hearing Dukakis but not feeling him. I asked that question to see if there was feeling.”

In 1989, Shaw was among the few American anchormen in Beijing when the Chinese authorities cracked down on pro-democracy student protests at Tiananmen Square. “Goodbye from Beijing,” he said, signing off as the government cut live transmissions and he was forced to phone in further reports.



Shaw in his office at CNN's Washington bureau on 15 February 2001. He retired two weeks later (AP)

The most serious test of his skill and stamina came in January 1991, when he arrived in Baghdad hoping for an interview with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, whose forces had invaded Kuwait. The interview fell through, and Shaw was making arrangements to leave the country when he found himself stranded, along with colleagues Peter Arnett and John Holliman, as the first US-led coalition bombs fell on the capital on 16 January.

Shaw perched by the window in a ninth-floor room at the Al-Rashid Hotel in Baghdad to witness the blaze of anti-aircraft fire as the Gulf War erupted. Phone lines for the three major broadcast networks were down, leaving the CNN news anchors the only American journalists able to provide live reports via satellite phones.

“The skies over Baghdad have been illuminated,” Shaw told a worldwide cable audience of a billion people. “We’re seeing bright flashes going off all over the sky.”

For the next 16 hours, until the Iraqi authorities shut down their communication, the trio reported non-stop during the onslaught of bombs and cruise missiles, with only brief breaks for sleep. “I’ve never been there,” Shaw told viewers, “but it feels like being in the centre of hell.”

The network received a Peabody Award for distinguished coverage of the war. “He literally helped put CNN on the map by being on the scene in the Gulf War,” said PBS’s *NewsHour* anchor Judy Woodruff, a former colleague of Shaw’s at CNN, where they co-hosted the show *Inside Politics*.

Shaw continued to hopscotch across the US and the globe. In 1995, he spent more than two weeks in Oklahoma City after a domestic terrorist targeted the Alfred P Murrah Federal Building with a truck bomb that killed 168 people. He later described a sense of “post-traumatic stress” from covering such gruesome events.

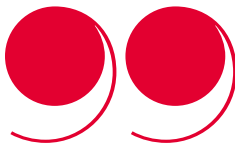
“That happened to me on a couple of other stories,” Shaw told CNN talk-show host Larry King. “Most of us, we’re so macho, we walk around pretending that these are not factors. But let’s be realistic: it’s really heavy-duty. I mean, to stand there yards

away from this vertical tomb, to see the concrete-mangled floors,” he continued, “and to know that human beings on each floor of the federal Murrah office building cascaded downward into a permanent hell of death – that has to affect you.”

Bernard Shaw was born in Chicago on 22 May 1940. His appetite for journalism was whetted by his father, a railroad worker and house painter who brought home four newspapers every night. His mother was a housekeeper.



His wife told him he would be impossible to live with if CNN wound up a success and he was not a part of it. ‘She knew there was a swashbuckler inside me’



As a teenager, Shaw avidly watched television programs featuring Murrow and Cronkite and set his sights on a broadcast news career. He was undaunted by the lack of Black faces on these broadcasts, later saying he didn’t see Murrow as White but simply as a journalist.

When Chicago hosted the Democratic National Conventions in 1952 and 1956, Shaw managed to make his way inside the hall. Live television coverage was then becoming an established practice. “When I looked up at the anchor booths,” Shaw told *Time* magazine decades later, “I knew I was looking at the altar.”

He enlisted in the US Marine Corps in 1959 and, while stationed in Hawaii in 1961, learned that Cronkite was coming to Honolulu for a story. Shaw tracked the newsman to his hotel and left repeated messages for him, pleading for a meeting, until Cronkite agreed to a conversation in the lobby. “He said the key

thing is to read, read,” Shaw recounted to *The New York Times* decades later. “We’ve been friends ever since.”

Back in Chicago, Shaw enrolled in 1963 at the University of Illinois but left when his side job in local radio news led to work for a TV station owned by Westinghouse Broadcasting. He was sent to Memphis in April 1968 to cover the aftermath of the assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr, and Westinghouse soon transferred him to Washington.

CBS, regarded as the premier news network, poached him in 1971. Shaw covered political beats before accepting an offer in 1977 from third-ranked ABC because of the promise of overseas experience.

He was on a fast track at ABC when he decided, befuddling even himself, to leave for an unknown cable venture. His wife had told him he would be impossible to live with if CNN wound up a success and he was not a part of it. “She knew there was a swashbuckler inside me,” he said. “I saw it as perhaps the last frontier on television.”

He and his wife, the former Linda Allston, had a son, Amar, and a daughter, Anil. A complete list of survivors was not immediately available. As his career advanced, Shaw said he increasingly wrestled with the “untold sacrifices” his family had made for his work and the milestones in his children’s lives that he had missed. After moderating the 2000 vice-presidential debate between Republican Dick Cheney and Democrat Joseph I Lieberman, Shaw retired, aged 60, after his contract expired.

He made periodic returns to TV but mostly pursued a quiet life with his family. “I’m committing anchor heresy,” he acknowledged in a 2001 interview with King, when he walked away from CNN. “Most people in these jobs, as you and your viewers know, do not give them up. But a little voice inside this size 7½ head has told me, ‘Bernie, it’s time to go.’”

Bernard Shaw, journalist and anchor, born 22 May 1940, died 7 September 2022

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Empty stadiums is no way to show respect to anyone



The sport actually does solemn remembrance very well. Does anyone doubt this weekend's games would have been packed? (Action Images/Reuters)

MIGUEL DELANEY

CHIEF FOOTBALL WRITER

When the Premier League met at 11am on Friday morning, one consideration was paramount, and the decision took just 20 minutes. The late Queen Elizabeth II was a patron of the Football Association with Prince William, as well as the monarch

for more than 70 years, so the only possible conclusion was to postpone. It was purely, to quote a few sources, about “respect”.

That was despite other sports playing on, and the fact that there were a lot of serious elements to respectfully consider. The decision was nothing to do with a lack of policing, something that could be an issue before the funeral next weekend, potentially causing a second successive week of postponed fixtures. That is to be discussed. It could have significant consequences for many.

With the Premier League’s announcement coming just over 24 hours until the first fixture of the weekend, all of the clubs involved had to plan as if the matches were taking place. This meant an entire economy of freelance workers, casuals and employees on zero-hours contracts being told they would be working, a number that ran into the thousands across the game.

Clubs themselves might have had to take a hit on cancellation at 25 per cent of fees, which may not be an issue for the Premier League, but is a big problem outside it. Then there’s the amount of food that goes to waste, with transportation and storage issues ensuring not all of it can go to food banks.

Tens of thousands of fans had, meanwhile, made travel plans, the Premier League’s international popularity ensuring a good number of those would have come from abroad. Many won’t get refunds on travel or hotels. Some provisions are at least possible for those who had booked by train to ensure a voucher refund – if they claim early enough.

Chelsea Women were supposed to play at Stamford Bridge, in what was to be a momentum-building weekend for the women’s game and the Women’s Super League. Then there’s the most absurd decision of all: the cancellation of football for kids and schools. It is ludicrous, undermining all of the messages about physical activity, especially as so many other sports are carrying on as normal. That badly needs to be overturned. That all adds up to a significant societal cost, much of it to the Queen’s citizens.



Manchester United take part in a minute's silence at Old Trafford on Thursday (PA)

There are a number of polemical arguments that could be made on other pages about how many British people don't feel strongly about this; that it's forcing them into mourning; that it's actually changing the mood. There was a darkly absurd moment during Manchester United's Europa League match when commentators repeatedly referred to fans having things other than football on their mind, only for some abrasive chants about the owners, the Glazers, to start up.

"These aren't Victorian times," one involved source said. "You can't treat sport like that any more". Except, in 1952, when King George VI died, and in 1936, when King George V died, football played on.

That's another element to it. The sport actually does solemn remembrance very well. While some would have of course insisted that the games are called off, other affected fans would have wanted to use their games to show respect. Does anyone doubt this weekend's games would have been packed? The Football Supporters Association has issued a statement that it "was an opportunity missed for football to pay its own special tributes".

Above anything, though, there is a pointed symbolism to the people's game costing people thousands and negatively affecting their lives – and that amid a cost of living crisis of so much financial and emotional austerity – out of deference to what

remains an elite institution. And, perhaps, a misplaced deference.

It's all the more ironic given that sports more associated with the establishment such as cricket, rugby and even horse racing – which was the Queen's great sporting passion – are carrying on at times when the football will be off. There is then the fact many people are pointing out how one of the things the Queen was most admired for was stoically carrying on.

Sport, to rightly afford the governing bodies some allowance, was put in a difficult position here. "There was no rulebook," one source said. In fact, there were no rules at all, but by design. The Department of Culture, Sport and Media issued new guidance on national mourning and specifically stated that "there is no obligation to cancel or postpone events and sporting fixtures ... this is at the discretion of individual organisations". This was also known through planning meetings for years.

When you weigh up all the various elements, including the debate over what actually constitutes "respect", it is difficult not to conclude football has made the wrong decision. It's difficult not to ask whether it is purely about public relations and potential criticism for *not* postponing. It has just meant that so many of the Queen's citizens feel the cost.

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Leclerc puts it all on the line for pole at mad Monza



Thumbs up: Ferrari's Charles Leclerc topped the qualifying session ahead of today's Italian Grand Prix at the Autodromo Nazionale circuit (AFP/Getty)

KIERAN JACKSON

AT MONZA

With the humongous roar of the red-clad fanbase in the stands propelling him on, Charles Leclerc put it all on the line to grab pole position at Ferrari's home race amid starting grid confusion after qualifying at the Italian Grand Prix.

While nine drivers have taken differing grid drops for today's race at Monza's centenary event, Leclerc is one of the few frontrunners to be unaffected. Yet in the end, he earnt top spot out on track, surging past teammate Carlos Sainz and holding off Max Verstappen in his "on the limit" final run in Q3.

"It's a very good surprise today. After Spa we were not expecting to fight for pole here," a beaming Leclerc – resplendent in his unique yellow race suit for this special weekend – said afterwards. "We found some pace, we've worked in the right direction and hopefully we can show that in the race. Whatever happens in the first lap, I still think we have the pace to win the race. No mistakes and I think we can have a good Sunday."

Mistakes, of course, are what have overshadowed Ferrari's emergence from the wilderness this year. Any pit stop or strategy miscalculation tomorrow will be felt here more than anywhere, with the fierce eyes of the *tifosi* reacting to every move as the Prancing Horse celebrates its 75th anniversary.



Max Verstappen qualified second but has a five-place grid drop (AFP/Getty)

George Russell – who qualified in sixth – will start alongside Leclerc on the front row, courtesy of the grid mayhem which has enraptured this Monza weekend due to engine and gearbox penalties aplenty. Lando Norris, a podium finisher last year in McLaren's one-two, will start in third.

Verstappen qualified in second but will take a five-place grid drop and, similarly, Perez was fourth-fastest but has a 10-place drop.

Sainz, who took P3 in qualifying and has been rapid all weekend, will start from P18 courtesy of his back-of-the-grid penalty, with fifth in qualifying Lewis Hamilton in 19th due to the same punishment.

Regardless of the disjointed grid, it didn't matter in Spa-Francorchamps two weeks ago, when Verstappen cruised to victory from P14 on the grid. At a shorter track though and with the pace of the Ferrari surprising everyone on the paddock this weekend, the championship leader's surge to the front may be more troublesome.

"It looks good from our side for the race," Verstappen said, confidently. "We clear the cars in between us quite quickly and then we have a good chance. The Ferrari is a bit faster on the straights but we're still quick compared to the rest of the field. We can make our way through..."

The day started with Williams driver Alex Albon pulling out of the weekend due to an appendicitis diagnosis, with Formula 2 and Formula E champion Nyck de Vries replacing him.



George Russell will start on the front row (Getty)

And up until Q3, the focus was predominantly on Dutchman De Vries after he out-qualified teammate Nicholas Latifi to make Q2. The perfect job interview, some might say, with Latifi's

future at Williams unclear for 2023. De Vries ended up 13th but could start as high as eighth once grid penalties are accounted for.

Starting alongside Leclerc in P2, what about Russell? After he was unable to follow up his first pole position in Budapest in July with a maiden victory, his decisiveness out on track earned him second place in Zandvoort last week. Mercedes' race pace has been impressive all season, too.

"We're not too focused on him [Verstappen] because they'll finish ahead of us ultimately," a pessimistic Russell said in the media pen. "He'll probably be in the lead after 15 laps. I don't think it's quite as easy to overtake here as it was in Spa but with the pace they've got, he'll slice through."

Irrespective of Verstappen, though, the balance has shifted Ferrari's way courtesy of yesterday's strong afternoon display. And while a championship is in all likelihood out of reach – Leclerc is joint-second, 109 points behind Verstappen with seven races to go – a win at Monza will taste just as sweet as his tremendous triumph in his rookie season with Ferrari three years ago.

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Sports news in brief

Premier League club to donate unused food

Premier League clubs have pledged to donate redundant food to charities and good causes after the death of Her Majesty The Queen led to the postponement of this weekend's fixtures. Fulham, Bournemouth, Liverpool, Southampton, Manchester City, Arsenal, Leicester, West Ham and Crystal Palace, all of which were due to play at home this weekend, will make donations, while Leeds's charitable efforts have been confirmed.

Surplus catering supplies from Elland Road, where the West Yorkshire club were set to host Nottingham Forest on Monday evening, have been passed on via the Leeds United Supporters' Trust. Liverpool, who were preparing to play Wolves on Saturday, have already made a "massive" donation of food to local organisations, including two schools, Fans Supporting Foodbanks, a homeless centre and a youth hostel. Manchester City are expected to distribute any food with a short shelf life to organisations around Manchester. *PA*

Exeter beat champions Leicester on opening day

Exeter prop Patrick Schickerling scored a last-minute try to send reigning champions Leicester to an opening-day defeat in the Gallagher Premiership. In a hugely competitive tussle a draw would have been a fair result, but Schickerling's winner rewarded a strong last 20 minutes from Exeter, who picked up a morale-boosting 24-20 victory after last season's disappointing seventh-placed finish.

Solomone Kata was the other try scorer for Chiefs. There was also a penalty try awarded, with Joe Simmonds kicking a penalty and two conversions. Hanro Liebenberg and Charlie Clare scored Leicester's tries, both of which Jimmy Gopperth converted. Freddie Burns added two penalties. *PA*

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How the King can shape the landscape on green issues

Saphora Smith looks at how Charles III's beliefs could still make an impact on climate change and biodiversity debates



As Prince of Wales, Charles championed nature (Getty)

An ardent environmentalist is now the King of the United Kingdom. King Charles III, who ascended to the throne after the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II, has spent the last half century advocating for sustainability, organic farming and the importance of tackling the climate crisis and biodiversity loss.

In his first speech on the environment, in February 1970, the Prince of Wales as was warned of the “horrifying effects of pollution in all its cancerous forms”. Since then he has championed nature from the fields of his organic farms to the lecterns of conference halls around the globe – and, as many observers have noted, long before it was fashionable.

“After billions of years of evolution, nature is our best teacher,” he told world leaders at the Cop26 climate conference in Glasgow last year. “In this regard, restoring natural capital, accelerating nature-based solutions and leveraging the circular bio-economy will be vital to our efforts” to tackle global heating.

In 2017, when asked by his son, Prince Harry, on BBC Radio 4 if there was one issue he could focus on, Charles replied that climate change was now “the biggest threat multiplier we face” and was causing “untold horrors in different parts of the world”.

His remarks are salient in a year when temperatures in the United Kingdom exceeded 40C for the first time on record, Europe observed what some have described as the worst drought in 500 years, India sweltered through its hottest March in more than a century, and floods in Pakistan have left more than 1,000 dead and nearly half a million displaced, to name a few examples.

It remains to be seen how the King’s environmental commitment will manifest itself now he has assumed the stricter constitutional role of monarch – and whether his well-known views on the subject will have an impact on climate action in the UK and beyond.



Charles, then the Prince of Wales, visits a sustainable organic farm near San Francisco in 2005 (Getty)

"As the Queen herself did with such unswerving devotion, I too now solemnly pledge myself, throughout the remaining time God grants me, to uphold the constitutional principles at the heart of our nation," Charles said in his first address to the nation as King on Friday.

"My life will of course change as I take up my new responsibilities. It will no longer be possible for me to give so much of my time and energies to the charities and issues for which I care so deeply," he told the country. "But I know this important work will go on in the trusted hands of others."

In Britain's constitutional monarchy, the head of state needs to remain politically neutral. That means no more "impassioned" speeches now that he is monarch, according to Robert Hazell, professor of government and the constitution at University College London.

Any speeches delivered by the monarch have to be approved by the government of the day, the one exception being the Christmas broadcast, but even that is shown to officials, says Hazell.



The then Duke of Cambridge and then Prince of Wales with David Attenborough and Prince Harry (AFP via Getty)

“If the government didn’t like what he planned to say about agriculture, or climate change, or whatever, they would simply say ‘I’m sorry sir but in your speech we’ve taken out paragraphs five and seven,’” Hazell tells *The Independent*. “If he privately continued to lobby ministers on his pet subjects... I think, again, he would quite quickly be reined in by the prime minister,” Hazell adds.

In 2015, the Prince of Wales, as he was, lost a long legal battle to secure the release of letters he had written to government ministers detailing his views on a range of matters, from illegal fishing to herbal medicine. They were dubbed the “black spider” letters due to Charles’s handwriting and were controversial because some saw them as inappropriate lobbying.

Before becoming King, Charles said, he had tried to make sure that whatever he’d done had been non-party political. And asked in a BBC documentary in 2018 whether his public campaigning would continue once he ascended to the throne, he responded: “No, it won’t. I’m not that stupid. I do realise that it is a separate exercise being sovereign.”



Charles in discussion with local experts on the impact of climate change in northern Canada in May (Getty)

One place it's possible that a monarch might express their opinion is in their weekly audience with the prime minister of the day, but the public is not privy to what is said in those conversations. "It's totally confidential and no records are kept, so posterity doesn't even know," says Hazell.

However, even if the King is very careful about expressing his views, as he is expected to be, members of the public, domestic politicians and world leaders will remember his past positions, and that in itself might carry significance.

"I don't think anyone can really say in what ways he will take forward his commitment to the environmental agenda in the new role," says Tony Juniper, chair of Natural England and a former special adviser to the Prince of Wales' International Sustainability Unit and the Prince's Rainforests Project. "But what we can say is that he's made an enormous difference and a huge contribution to many environmental subjects going back more than 50 years."

Juniper, who co-authored a Ladybird book on climate change with the then Prince of Wales and climate scientist Emily Shuckburgh in 2017, says he thinks Charles is one of – if not the most – significant environmental figures that there's been in drawing attention to the questions of "deforestation, biodiversity loss, climate change and the need to shift our

collective impact through development of a circular economy and sustainable agriculture and reforestation”.



Charles visits the UK Atomic Energy Authority in January (AFP via Getty)

His contribution, Juniper says, is “unique” and “will be the context, apart from anything else, for the work he will do from here on in”.

“That track record, that legacy, undoubtedly will be part of what people see in the UK,” he adds.

Craig Bennett, chief executive of The Wildlife Trusts and a former director of The Prince of Wales’s Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change, says he thinks the King will not look to champion the environment in the same way he did as heir.

But he notes that part of the monarch’s role is to promote the long-term interests of the country, and considering there is now cross-party political agreement that global heating is a serious issue that needs to be dealt with, perhaps it will not be inappropriate for the monarch to say that the UK stands for action on climate change.

“Obviously, there’s still political debate about the specifics of... how to deal with it,” he says. “He will stay well out of that I’m sure.”



A quote from a message delivered by Queen Elizabeth II to the Cop26 UN climate summit (AFP via Getty)

Besides, Bennett says, it is important to remember that the late Queen was not silent on these issues. In her official address to the Glasgow climate talks, for example, she said many people hoped that the “time for words has now moved to the time for action”.

The Queen was a patron of many environmental causes, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Royal Forestry Society and the Campaign to Protect Rural England – and her platinum jubilee celebrations earlier this year highlighted the work she had done to encourage tree planting.

“It’s more about a continuation,” says Bennett, who accompanied Charles on several international tours when he was the Prince of Wales. Environmental causes were important to the late Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh as well as to King Charles III and the new Prince of Wales, he says. The point is that environmental causes are about the long-term interests of the country and the world.

“If there was one set of issues that it made sense for a monarchy to feel confident talking about, it would be this,” he adds.



Queen Elizabeth II and the then Prince of Wales plant a tree at the Balmoral Cricket Pavilion in 2021 (Getty)

Robin Teverson, a member of the House of Lords whose focus in the chamber includes the climate crisis, says he thinks any prime minister meeting the King will know his views on the climate crisis and nature-friendly farming, among other issues, even if he is “rightly” unable to intervene.

“That has the potential of giving a background reinforcement to those areas of national policy and national wellbeing,” he says, and could even act as a bit of a “safety net”.

There is also the reality that the public knows the new monarch’s views on environmentalism and the climate crisis, and so on. If there were a U-turn on some of these issues, the public would be aware that the King would not be happy, says Teverson, though the King will still read out the government’s legislative programme in the House of Lords, whether he agrees with it all or not, he adds.



The Prince of Wales speaks at Cop26 in Glasgow (AFP via Getty)

One area where the King's environmentalism might be able to flourish is in the way he manages his household. When he was Prince of Wales, 90 per cent of the energy used to power his offices and domestic quarters came from renewable sources. His household balanced out its emissions to zero by investing in sustainable forestry and projects that reduce deforestation, according to his website.

In the past there have been calls for the royal family – including Charles when he was Prince of Wales – to go further in their environmental commitment, including a high-profile petition for royal land to be rewilded. And questions have been raised about the environmental footprint of his private flights, as with other officials in public life. His principal private secretary told *The Independent* earlier this year that Charles had personally driven the move to use sustainable aviation fuel, which was used for all official travel “wherever possible”.

The new King can also support causes through his royal patronages as monarch, putting a “flag in the ground” in terms of his continuing values, says Teverson.

However the King chooses to express his commitment to the environment going forward, many environmentalists agree he has done more to amplify the voice of nature in his role as the Prince of Wales than most people do in a lifetime. In the past 50 years, there's nobody who's had the breadth of contribution,

over such a long period, that he's made, according to Juniper.
"It's unmatched," he adds.

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END OF AN ERA

With his son struggling to put on a tie, **Will Gore** reflects on the challenge of change... whatever happens, we carry on



Our lives are regularly punctuated with transitions (PA)

The transition from one school year to the next always brings mixed feelings. Moving to a new school can feel seismic. Last September, it was my daughter beginning afresh, launching herself into secondary education with enthusiasm but not a little trepidation. This year, it's been my son's turn, moving from infant to junior school.

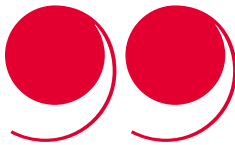
During his final days in year 2, back in July, it felt like an important era was drawing to a close. He had spent four years at his first school, including one in nursery, and had been truly happy there. The disruption of the coronavirus pandemic had first – in the initial, frightening lockdown – made us all realise just how good the place was, and how hard life was without the nurturing support of his excellent teachers and friends. Then, as schools reopened in difficult circumstances, we marvelled at the organisational brilliance and personal warmth of the staff, and we watched our son's Covid anger and anxiety gradually dissipate.

At end-of-term events, we were not the only parents shedding tears. For us though, seeing our youngest child leave felt particularly final: we would no longer have any connection to an institution that had been integral to our family life since our daughter's first day there nine years ago. We knew our son felt the loss too. On the occasions we walked past the gates during the summer holidays, he would look in sadly, reminding us either of a particularly notable moment in his time there, or of the fact that he wouldn't be going back. He exclaimed at a huge sunflower that had been planted by the children before the last term had ended and that had now bloomed brilliantly; but then he felt gloomy that he wouldn't be able to see it close at hand.

Worries about the new school centred primarily around the uniform. How would he cope with a shirt that had buttons, let alone a tie? We encouraged him to practice as the new term approached, but there was reluctance, then tearful frustration when the challenge outdid him. Then came doubts about what to do at lunchtime, and heartache over the fact that many of his old mates would be in different classes.



The end of the Elizabethan era and the beginning of King Charles III's reign is undoubtedly momentous, and yet at the same time it is not unexpected



On day one, last Monday, we discovered at the last moment that his class were scheduled to have PE and were required to arrive in their sports kit: uniform angst delayed. On day two, he surprised everyone by putting on his shirt and tie without a struggle. But as we left the house, he started to complain about the stiffness of his new shoes, then about his socks, which were ruffling against his heel. The complaints soon turned to angry tears and to accusations that I should have given him different footwear. He could not, he said, possibly walk to school.

I explained that I could offer no alternative at this stage that didn't involve dire lateness, so we continued to argue the toss until we arrived at his old, beloved, little school, where he was due to meet a friend, walking with her and her mother the rest of the way to the new, bigger, scarier place. I worried that he would either refuse to continue, or be rude to his friend's mum. I gave him a hug, told him he'd be fine and turned for home, hoping for the best – and fearing a phone call.

Instead, half an hour later, a text arrived to say the rest of the journey had been fine, full of chatter about Harry Potter. And that evening, having agreed to try different socks tomorrow, the clouds lifted. The rest of the week passed successfully: the uniform has not been troublesome; lunches have been delicious; his new teachers are lovely; lessons have been fun. The new

school has, in fact, brought just as much joy as the last one, and already there is the same sense of support, warmth and belonging.

Our lives are regularly punctuated with transitions: new schools, new homes and new jobs; the end of one relationship, the beginning of another; coping with the death of loved ones; general elections; and much else besides. Some changes can feel seamless, others create deep upheaval. The end of the Elizabethan era and the beginning of King Charles III's reign is undoubtedly momentous, and yet at the same time it is not unexpected, nor unplanned for. There will be a mass public bereavement, but there will be no turmoil. The monarchy will, in the end, remain a bulwark to our national identity.

How to cope with change? "One does", as the Queen said of carrying out her daily public duties. And she was right. Come what may, we look for the points of continuity, of familiarity, of reassurance to keep us on track – just as my son has done this week. Whatever happens, we carry on.

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COUNTY CHAMPION

Matthew Pinner shows off the beauty of his home county, Dorset, in a new book, from the cliffs and beaches of its Jurassic coast to its historic villages, writes **Dean Murray**



Lulworth Cove on the Jurassic coast (Photos Matthew Pinner/SWNS)

A landscape photographer is releasing a book to show off the beauty of his home county of Dorset. Matthew Pinner has collected some of his favourite photographs from the past few years.

In *Dorset in Pictures*, the Bournemouth-based snapper takes a fresh look at Dorset, capturing the huge variety of scenery, natural and man-made, that makes the southwestern county special.



Wimborne Minster, north of Poole



Hengistbury Head, Bournemouth



Sturminster Newton in the Blackmore Vale



Sixpenny Handley

“There are many reasons why I chose to capture Dorset images but mainly it’s because it’s my home,” he explains. “Not only is it one of the most iconic coastlines, but it is where I grew up and each place I capture it’s like I’m reliving precious memories.

“It’s hard to choose a favourite from the book, but if I had to then I would probably it would be Wimborne Minster in the mist as it was such an amazing morning. Mother Nature was on my side. Along with the poppy field, that image probably got some of the best feedback I have ever received.”



Knowlton Church



Moor Crichel on Cranborne Chase



Durdle Door on the Jurassic coast



Highcliffe Castle

“Typically I like to shoot either sunrise or sunset,” he adds, “as I love capturing the colours.”

‘Dorset in Pictures’ is published on 15 October

SWNS

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MEET YOUR MAKER

It's time the process of commissioning bespoke furniture or accessories was demystified, writes **Anya Cooklin-Lofting**



Bespoke sofa designed by Holloway Li and commissioned for the Bermonds Locke aparthotel (Holloway Li)

Bespoke. The word “bespoke” has become so ubiquitous in the design community that some believe its very meaning has been erased. From the perspective of artisans conjuring heirlooms from tree trunks and keepsakes from fragments of metal, adapting an off-the-shelf cushion with a so-called bespoke trim in one of five available colourways falls into a separate category

entirely from the one in which they are operating. Of course, personalised details can still lend a sense of individuality and identity to a home overall, but for purists, the cushion itself cannot be said to be truly bespoke. Absolute uniqueness is the determining factor in the creation of a piece of furniture or artwork worthy of the divisive adjective; the uniqueness of the brief, the special relationship between the maker and the commissioner, and of course, the sheer originality of the finished piece contribute in equal parts to its bespoke status.

Charu Gandhi, the founder of the well-known interior design firm, Elicyon, is quick to tell me that it's high time the process of commissioning bespoke furniture, accessories or gifts was demystified and democratised, going as far as to say that, "commissioning a bespoke piece can sometimes work out as the same price as purchasing a branded piece of furniture." Gandhi believes that commissioning bespoke furniture has too long been the preserve of the super-rich and that with the right knowledge and a nudge in the right direction, the option is open to the bespoke-curious at any budget. So this week, I spoke to some of the top interior designers about how they approach commissioning bespoke furniture for their clients and how beginners might be able to get involved.

Establish your motivation

The first step on the journey to commissioning your first piece of furniture, artwork or accessory is to establish a clear motivation for doing so. Any number of factors might influence your decision, but the most common reasons are to create a piece that fits into an unusual room, to invest in quality craftsmanship for a gift or to pass down to the next generation, or to develop a piece of furniture you require but that doesn't exist "off the shelf". For Alex Holloway and Na Li, co-Founders of the London-based design studio Holloway Li, "commissioning bespoke furniture is often actually easier than finding something that will work or look the way you need it to. Without constraints on colour, finish or size, you can tailor a piece exactly to your requirements," instead of retrofitting a

piece of furniture that is already in production and may not be quite right.

Makers' mark

“Following makers on Instagram and visiting craft and design fairs is a great way to add to your little black book for makers,” says Gandhi, who will be sitting on the selection panel for Goldsmiths’ Fair this year, the 40th anniversary of the major contemporary silver and fine jewellery event. “Fairs such as Goldsmiths’, Made London and London Craft



A bespoke desk and chair made for this study in an Elicyon project (Elicyon)

Week showcase some of the amazing makers and provide privileged access to working studios,” she says. For Gandhi, one of the most exciting parts of creating a piece of furniture in collaboration with a craftsperson is the relationship you develop, “which in turn plays a big part in the value of the product”.

Camilla Clarke, a creative director at the interior design firm Albion Nord, feels similarly. “Whenever we commission a piece of bespoke furniture for a client,” she says, “we connect them with the maker to forge a relationship, which helps to give the brief more meaning. If you can meet with the craftsperson to see their workshop or studio, you get a sense of who they are and how they work with their materials and feel intimately connected to the genesis of the final piece.” For Clarke, it’s all about the process and the relationships along the way, “working collaboratively to bring something new into the world that you will keep and pass down”.



Elicyon designed this chess board for a residence at the famous Chelsea Barracks development (Elicyon)

Time isn't always money

“One of the most important considerations to bear in mind is that you’ll need to account for testing things out and allowing enough time for trial and error and prototyping,” say Holloway and Li. “We find that clients really want to be taken on that journey and have the patience for the process if they feel that they are getting something unique out of it,” they add. Gandhi also warns of the timescales involved in bespoke commissioning, saying, “craft requires time and makers shouldn’t be rushed.”

Interestingly, she notes that imposing a tight timeframe can often mean that you end up spending more money without achieving the desired results. “If you have the luxury of time,” she suggests, “it could be worth waiting slightly longer for your piece to allow the craftsperson to source rare or limited materials as and when they become more readily available. Ultimately, it’s important to be guided by the maker as they know the materials best and what is available in terms of cost and timeline. Trusting your maker will result in a final product you can be pleased with, as cost and materiality go hand in hand.”

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Why are the Kardashians immune to cancellation?

We get angry at the reality family like clockwork but why doesn't backlash ever seem to stick, asks **Saman Javed**



There was outrage but little of it seemed to last. We moved on to other things (Disney Plus)

What will it take for the Kardashians to get cancelled? No one courts public opinion quite like the reality show family. Between five sisters and their powerhouse momager Kris Jenner, they have a combined Instagram following of more than 1.8 billion

and business ventures spanning the wellness, fashion, beauty, alcohol, food and tech industries. With great fame comes intense scrutiny, and the Kardashians have had their fair share. But as their peers become forever tainted by their own controversies – will Will Smith ever not be associated with slapping Chris Rock? Or Olivia Wilde with the *Don't Worry Darling* drama? – the Kardashian reputation remains largely unscathed. Even when we're all horrified by them.

Earlier this week, both Kim and Kourtney faced an intense backlash for making light of the climate crisis while ignoring their own environmental impact. The eldest of the sisters, Kourtney was named sustainability ambassador of fast fashion brand Boohoo. It's a match made in Greta Thunberg's worst nightmares. The Environmental Audit Committee has named Boohoo one of the least sustainable fashion brands in the UK, while Kourtney regularly flies by private jet and was recently criticised for overusing water during a drought. Kim – who is alleged to have fired up her jet for mere 10-minute flights – punctuated the Kardashian Climate discourse by simultaneously telling *Interview* magazine that she “picks and chooses” how to support the environment. “No one's going to be 100 per cent perfect,” she added.

It all felt like a slap in the face for poor nations across the world who are grappling with the real-life consequences of climate catastrophe. Around 30 million people have been displaced by widespread flooding in Pakistan and it is estimated that a third of the country is currently under water. More than 1,300 people have died, and water-borne diseases are now spreading among flood victims. According to Our World in Data, as of 2020, the country is responsible for just 0.3 per cent of global cumulative CO2 emissions, compared to 4.61 per cent by the UK and 24.56 per cent by the US.

While Kourtney is by no means obligated to use her platform to raise awareness of, well, anything, sustainable fashion activists have accused her of using the very real climate crisis to further her own image and status. Campaigner Venetia La Manna says that the partnership “feels like satire” and “one of the most

shameless greenwashing campaigns” she has ever seen from a fashion brand. Fellow advocate Brett Staniland, who previously protested outside a Pretty Little Thing’s runway show, rebuked it as “clickbait for even more sales”. He adds: “[The Kardashians] are the royal family of overconsumption and have churned out products year after year in the name of greed. Even if they claim they do want to save the world, they’re partnering with brands that clearly don’t. The only thing these parties care about is money.” Meanwhile, Celine Semaan, the founder of Slow Factory, says the Kardashians display a “lack of perspective and compassion”, which “cannot afford them the experience and knowledge to act as good stewards of our land and good ambassadors of what human rights represent”.

There was outrage, but little of it seemed to last. Critical headlines blared for a day or two. There were a few dozen viral tweets. We moved on to other things. Perhaps anticipating the backlash, Kourtney herself did not promote her new Boohoo role on any of her social media accounts. Or maybe sustainability isn’t very high on her list of priorities? Perhaps such a role just isn’t worth showing off to her 169 million followers. Come the end of the week, Kim’s fans were treated to a new SKIMS drop, while Kourtney had moved on to teasing the arrival of her upcoming brand, named lemme.



For many of their fans, the Kardashians provide a form of escapism. It’s a part of human nature. We like to be removed from our own humdrum lives to enjoy watching their antics



This careful silence before vaulting to the next product launch or tidbit of news is a key component of the Kardashians' armour against criticism. When a video showing Kim's advice for women in business ("get your asses up and work... it seems like nobody wants to work these days") went viral on social media in March, the mogul kept quiet for weeks. In 2014, Kylie Jenner remained silent as people speculated about her ever-growing lip size, even when some young people began using dangerous vacuum devices to try and emulate her bee-stung appearance. Whenever the Kardashians do make statements, their approach is often calculated and deflects responsibility. Long after the *Variety* interview, Kim told *Good Morning America* her comments about work were "taken out of context". Kim's claim was refuted by *Variety*'s chief correspondent Elizabeth Wagmeister, who said Kim was asked a "very direct question".

In other instances, they rely on the power of ignorance. In May, Kim revealed she had lost 16 pounds in three weeks to fit into Marilyn Monroe's Jean Louis gown for this year's Met Gala. The Kardashians have long been accused of perpetuating harmful beauty ideals, and eating disorder charity Beat said Kim's rapid weight loss could be "very attractive to those affected by eating disorders, who may treat it as inspiration to carry out dangerous eating disorder behaviours". In response, Kim said the criticisms were unfair, and that her diet was no different to actors losing weight for an upcoming film role. She was seemingly oblivious to the impossible beauty standards society places on women.

Experts believe the perception that the Kardashians are "detached from reality" – coupled with how much of their lives we see on their reality TV shows – is a key factor in their appeal and the public's willingness to overlook their mishaps. In a trailer for the new season of their series *The Kardashians*, Kim is seen saying she was "mortified" by the backlash from the *Variety* interview. But by the time the show airs, the interview will be more than six months old and just another plot line for viewers' entertainment. "Not only do they seem otherworldly compared to us and therefore different rules apply," says psychologist Dr Sandra Wheatley, "for many of their fans the Kardashians

provide a form of escapism. It's a part of human nature. We like to be removed from our own humdrum lives to enjoy watching their antics."

Fans have lauded the family's impeccable "PR machine", namely Kris's impressive distraction tactics. Last month, news of Kim's split from *Saturday Night Live* comedian Pete Davidson broke within hours of the news that Khloe Kardashian and Tristan Thompson had welcomed their second child together. One social media user noted the "convenient" timing, adding: "The devil works hard but Kris Jenner works harder."

Of course, each of these tactics is underpinned by the truth that controversy is central to the Kardashians' success. They are not at odds with their critics – public opinion is the very thing that allows them to thrive. It's a feeling echoed by public relations experts like Sophie Attwood. "Ongoing drama with pregnancy, relationships and fights only work to drive interest further," she tells me. "It doesn't matter what the Kardashians say or do – audiences will keep listening, watching and buying. Ultimately, they keep the train moving forward at pace. Everyone – albeit some with a slight grumble – sits down for the ride."

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BIG DRESS ENERGY

From the Met Gala to Zoom, Nicola Coughlan's unique style is revered on and off the red carpet. The actor's stylist tells **Laura Hampson** of the joy of dressing fashion's latest 'it girl'



The 'Derry Girls' star's style has gone from strength to strength (Getty/Independent)

It is easy to pinpoint the moment when Nicola Coughlan first appeared on the style set's radar. We were still bathing in the afterglow of the lascivious first season of *Bridgerton*, Netflix's

Regency-era romp, when Coughlan attended the 2021 Golden Globes. She went all out with a buttercup-yellow Molly Goddard gown that featured an empire waist and layers of golden tulle. The 35-year-old completed the look with a tie-up cardigan, sleek blonde bob and lashings of hot-pink eyeshadow.

The look was even more of a feat considering that a small thing called the pandemic had kept her from attending the ceremony in person. She might be the only human who's ever looked chic on Zoom; for us mere spectators, it was lust at first sight.

Since then, the *Derry Girls* star's style has only gone from strength to strength, and while others might stick to the same tried and tested formula, Coughlan does something new each time, experimenting with her beauty looks as well as her fashion sense. Her dreamy Golden Globes outfit was just the beginning.

She wore a custom vivid orange Valentino gown to the Baftas last year, donned a ruffled periwinkle-blue Selezza London dress to a Tiffany launch at Harrods, and was lauded for the bejewelled and feathered Richard Quinn gown she appeared in at this year's Met Gala. And if an invite to the Met Gala wasn't enough to cement her fashion status, Coughlan also frequently appears in *Vogue*, and she was asked to be a judge for *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Is there a higher sartorial accolade?



Nicola has the most amazing library of film references, and I come in with the fashion reference, which makes for a brilliant red-carpet concept



Yet Coughlan wasn't always a Fashion Girl. As she told *Vogue* in May, she used to be "quite intimidated" by the industry, but her curiosity began to emerge when she was surrounded by lavish frocks in *Bridgerton*. She had just started to dip her toes into the world of high-end fashion when she met stylist Aimee Croysdill. Shortly after that, Coughlan became the red carpet's Next Big Thing.

"Nicola approached me. She knew she had the *Bridgerton* press tour coming up, so we had our first blind date in Selfridges," Croysdill tells me. She'd already worked with several high-profile actors, including Laura Haddock, Lolly Adefope and Natalie Dormer, at this point – but something just clicked when she met Coughlan.

"We always have a meeting of minds; it's funny how often we're thinking the same thing," Croysdill says. "Nicola has the most amazing library of film references, and I come in with the fashion reference, which makes for a brilliant start to each red-carpet concept. We're always wanting to try something new, but also keeping true to Nicola's style." These references have included everything from Shirley MacLaine in the 1964 film *What a Way to Go!* to Twiggy in 1971's *The Boy Friend* and Gwyneth Paltrow in Wes Anderson's early Noughties hipster classic *The Royal Tenenbaums*.

"I send references, colours and ideas to the fashion house, and eagerly await the sketches," Croysdill explains. "From there, Nicola and I tweak, refine, and add components that we know work well. Seeing the ideas come to life when unboxing the huge boxes they come in is very exciting."



Coughlan at this year's Baftas, wearing a gown designed by Pierpaolo Piccioli (Getty)

There are two fashion houses that Croysdill repeatedly turns to when dressing Coughlan: Valentino and Emilia Wickstead. Both allow for the modern yet timeless look the stylist has in mind for the *Bridgerton* star. She explains: “They always do the most incredible cuts, using chic timeless designs with the perfect edge and modernism thrown in.”

It's not just fashion editors who are fawning over Coughlan's style – her looks have garnered endless praise from social media fans, too. “Whoever styles Nicola Coughlan, god they are doing SUCH A GOOD JOB, she is such a darling and always looks delightful everytime”, one person wrote. Another added: “Nicola Coughlan bringing the big dress energy.” Croysdill is delighted by the reaction. “Nicola is such a wonder; everything about her exudes kindness, and her beauty shines from the inside out. I think it's exactly what the world needs.”

Perhaps the reason why Coughlan's style is so exciting is that she is not a typical sample size. It's refreshing to see someone who isn't stick-thin wearing such high-end designers; even better, seeing designers fall over themselves to make custom gowns for her.

In a way, she is taking back control of her body, and her narrative. Coughlan is used to people having opinions on her body, but it doesn't mean she wants to hear them. In 2018, she

called out a critic for describing her as an “overweight little girl”, and in January this year she took to Instagram to ask people not to share their opinions about her body with her. “It’s really hard to take the weight of thousands of opinions on how you look being sent directly to you every day,” she wrote.



Aimee Croysdill has been styling Coughlan since the actor's first 'Bridgerton' press tour (Supplied)

Maybe leaning into fashion – and having fun with it – is Coughlan's own subtle way of changing the discourse around her body (which, let's face it, shouldn't be up for discussion anyway).

She often makes a deeper statement through the designers she partners with. Take, for example, the candy-hued gown from

Pierpaolo Piccioli's Valentino spring/summer 2022 collection that she wore to this year's Baftas. Piccioli's latest collections have focused on inclusivity; he has included models of every shape, size and ethnicity in his latest runway shows. Coughlan wearing one of his gowns shows that she's on board with his vision, one that's a step ahead of the rest of the industry.

"As a mother to two children, I feel 'we' as an industry need to be celebrating kindness and realism," Croysdill says. "The standards have been so narrow that we have to rewrite them for the future of our children. It's about celebrating who you are, and I think Nicola does just that."

The panache with which Coughlan has navigated the red carpet suggests she's ready to become an even bigger star. That's already on the cards: her character Penelope Featherington will take the lead in the third season of *Bridgerton* when it's released early next year. No one yet knows what's next for Lady Whistledown – but we do know that, with Croysdill by her side, Coughlan will continue to serve the looks. Long may the lusting continue.

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Top 10... longest-reigning monarchs in British history

Queen Elizabeth II outlasted them all, writes **John Rentoul**



The Queen surpassed Victoria's reign in 2015 (Getty)

I first published this list seven years ago, when Elizabeth II overtook Victoria. Now it is time to close the book on the top of the league table.

1. **Elizabeth II** of the United Kingdom, 1952-2022; 70 years.
2. **Victoria** of the United Kingdom, 1837-1901; 63 years.

3. **George III** of Great Britain and Ireland, and from 1801 of the United Kingdom, 1760-1820; 59 years. He was also king of Hanover, but never went there. And king of the American colonies until 1776.
4. **James VI** of Scotland, and I of England, 1567-1625; 57 years. By the time he became king of England, he had already been king of Scotland for 36 years (having succeeded to the throne at the age of one).
5. **Henry III** of England, 1216-1272; 56 years. French-speaking Duke of Normandy who consolidated English law.
6. **Edward III** of England, 1327-1377; 50 years. Oversaw the early development of parliament; outlived his eldest son, Edward the Black Prince, and was succeeded by his grandson Richard II.
7. **William I** of Scotland, 1165-1214; 48 years. Captured by the English at the battle of Alnwick in 1174, he was forced to accept the English king's authority over Scotland for 15 years, until Richard I of England, who wanted money for the crusades, agreed to be paid off.
8. **Charles Brooke**, Rajah of Sarawak, 1868-1917; 48 years. If British monarch is taken to be a ruling monarch who is British by nationality, Alasdair Brooks nominated the longest-serving "White Rajah".
9. **Llywelyn II** of Gwynedd, 1194 or 1195-1240; 44-46 years. "The most outstanding native ruler to appear in Wales before the region came under English rule in 1283," according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Thanks to Clive Carpenter and Davey Barton, who called him "My local chap".
10. **Elizabeth I** of England and Ireland, 1558-1603; 44 years.

Next week: Fake George Orwell quotations.

Coming soon: Extinct first names, after I came across the work of Algernon Newton, the artist.

Your suggestions please, and ideas for future Top 10s, to me on Twitter, or by email to top10@independent.co.uk

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TEN GREEN BOTTLES

Swap single-use plastic with these insulated, leakproof and durable alternatives for children, says **Rebecca Moore**



You may be trying to encourage your children to do two things – drink more water and use less plastic, and what better place to start than choosing the best reusable bottles? According to the British Nutrition Foundation, generally speaking, children should aim to drink about six to eight glasses of fluid per day.

But when you're on the go, it's not always easy to keep energetic young ones' water levels topped up.

While each child's needs vary, depending on age, gender, the weather and how much physical activity they do, it is known young children have a higher proportion of body water than adults. They are also less heat tolerant and may be more likely to get dehydrated, especially when being physically active and in hot climates, which means choosing the right reusable bottle is key for on-the-go hydration.

All bottles that we tested are made from either stainless steel, which is the most hygienic material for handling food and drink, food-grade safe silicone, or BPA-free plastics (BPA is an industrial chemical that may find its way into your food and beverages).

A popular market, many designs will attract young ones looking for their next refuel, whether it's a friendly animal face on the bottle or a fun straw that flicks into action. By switching to a reusable bottle instead of single-use plastic, it makes staying hydrated easier, and in the long term is good for both the wallet and the planet. Our round-up will help you find the perfect match.

How we tested

Our four and six-year-old reviewers helped to test a range of reusable bottles out over the summer holidays. Testing them only with water, we considered how they fared in terms of usability for drinking, leakages, practicality (such as cleaning) and longevity of use – giving extra kudos to those with innovative features that improved the life of the product. Fun designs also garnered points for likeability.



Thermos funtainer bottle, 355ml £19, [Thermos.co.uk](https://thermos.co.uk)

Thermos is a household brand with more than 100 years' experience of producing "on the go" food and drink products. What the funtainer lacks in funky illustrations and quirky shapes, it makes up for in usability. Carrying claims to keep drinks cool for 12 hours is no myth, as the Thermos vacuum insulation retains cold temperatures and we were impressed by how fresh our drink stayed throughout the day despite the outdoor heat. The push-button reveals a pop-up straw, making it not only a hygienic but a practical choice, too. It also has a non-slip base, and a clever flip-up carry loop (which is so discreet we didn't find it on first use). Parents are also provided with peace of mind as it boasts a five-year guarantee, but it does require handwashing.

Buy now



**Contigo kids water bottle gizmo autospout, 420ml £18.35,
[Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)**

A leaky water bottle is a thing of the past if you have a Contigo, with its integrated spill-proof valve. Ergonomically designed, simply press the button and the mouthpiece will fold out – our testers found this rather entertaining in itself – this also means no pesky dirt or germs can get onto the mouthpiece. You do have to suck quite hard to get the liquid out, but after a few goes this seems second nature. It's a hugely robust choice and made from a light tritan copolyester that is BPA-free. Simply take apart and pop in the dishwasher for effortless cleaning. Plus, younger ones will love the huge range of designs to choose from.

Buy now



Hello Hossy mini joy bottle, 470ml £29.90, [Hello-hossy.co.uk](https://hello-hossy.co.uk)

If this review was based on packaging alone then Hello Hossy would win hands down. Brightly designed with the brand's tagline "cool kids only", it gives an insight into what's inside the box. Newly released from French apparel brand Hello Hossy, the stainless-steel mini joy bottle holds an impressive 470ml, yet feels compact. Our mini testers took kindly to the integrated handle, but a highlight for us had to be the non-slip base – keeping the bottle standing proud. The cap with straw is easy to drink from, although we did find flipping the cap a little stiff to start with.

Durable and child-friendly, it deceptively holds a decent amount of fluid and, thanks to the stainless steel, it kept drinks cool too. We love the delicious pastel block colours, and have no issues sharing this with our little ones.

Buy now



**B.Box tritan drink bottle strawberry shake, 450ml £19.99,
Jojomamanbebe.co.uk**

While this bottle may resemble a space age design, it's full of practical features. Australian brand B.Box creates fun and functional everyday baby essentials and the tritan drink bottle is much like a sippy cup's older sibling. Holding 450ml, it boasts a unique triangle shape which felt natural in our mini tester's small hands. The silicone straw is a standout feature – press the release button and the angle straw is revealed – this fun process in itself won over our testers, and the angled nature means it's always ready for action and a doddle to use.

Being able to carry the bottle with the integrated handle is a thoughtful touch, while the tritan plastic means it's incredibly durable and impact resistant too. There's a removable rubber base bumper that prevents it toppling over, it's dishwasher friendly and no leaks were detected!

Buy now



**Hydro Flask 12oz kids bottle, 355ml £26.95,
Littleadventureshop.co.uk**

Outdoorsy brand Hydro Flask creates durable bottles that are adventure-ready. What we first noticed about this bottle in question is the wide spout, which makes for easy drinking. On the first few attempts it was a little stiff to flip but now comes naturally. There's an integrated handle allowing our little testers to go about their daily business while keeping hydrated, plus the perforated base cover eradicates denting when it's dropped.

A hardwearing bottle, it doesn't claim to be leakproof when using the mouth straw but we've had no complaints so far. The four colourways (pink, mint, green and blue) are bright and catch your attention. We also love how cool it kept our drinks; the double-wall vacuum insulation keeps the contents – all 355ml of it – cool for 24 hours!

Buy now



Waterdrop toddler bottle steel, 400ml £29.90, [Waterdrop.com](https://www.waterdrop.com)

There's no denying this bottle's appeal for children as both of our little testers were instantly attracted to the brand's penguin design. But there's a lot more to this product than its pretty face. Designed specifically for children from 18 months, the spout-style lid provides a natural, familiar drinking experience. It's housed in a rubber cap that keeps it clean too, particularly helpful for days at the beach, and there's also a smart leak-proof valve that kept all belongings dry. We also found the single-walled stainless steel kept the 400ml of contents cool.

There's a collection of four toddler bottles from Waterdrop, the hardest bit is selecting your animal of choice – bear, racoon, tiger – but for us the penguin seemed fitting. You are able to pop this penguin in the dishwasher, but we didn't want to risk ruining his adorable face, so we found handwashing did the trick. It comes beautifully presented making it a thoughtful gift too.

Buy now



**Liewood warren bottle sea creature/sandy mix, 350ml £23,
[Scandiborn.co.uk](https://scandiborn.co.uk)**

From pretty patterned swimming costumes to stylish storage solutions, Nordic brand Liewood is effortlessly cool, both at home and on the go. And even something as practical as a water bottle is no exception. Unlike any other bottles we tested, the warren bottle comes in a square shape. The reason? To prevent it rolling away at super speed when dropped.

Uniquely, it's also made of food-safe silicone, which keeps chipping at bay and is highly durable. Because of this "soft" outer shell, our mini testers did get a kick out of the novelty of squeezing the bottle but they also seemed to drink from it with ease thanks to the sports cap. Holding 350ml of water, it's dishwasher safe, includes a cleaning straw, and comes in four child-friendly designs.

Buy now



Sho original 2.0 kids, 260ml £12.99, [Shoreusable.com](https://shoreusable.com)

When you think of a reusable bottle, this is the typical shape we've all become accustomed to, but thanks to its unique space-inspired print, this one will stand out from the crowd. This is the only bottle we tested that also caters for hot drinks as well as cold; the thermal function keeps liquids hot for up to 12 hours and cold up to 24 hours, and while your offspring are unlikely to be seasoned coffee drinkers, this 260ml bottle is the perfect vessel for a hot chocolate on the go.

Crafted from stainless steel and finished with a tough powder-coated paint, this bottle felt sturdy and reliable, and the brand's so confident that it's covered by its Sho lifetime guarantee. The drinking experience isn't as supportive as those bottles with a straw but there is the option to add a sippy straw. Plus, because of the typical lid design, it's 100 per cent leakproof.

Buy now



Tum Tum flip top water bottles, 400ml £8.99, [Hippychick.com](https://hippychick.com)

For less than £10, the British-designed Tum Tum water bottle is a great summer companion. The friendly fox design was a hit with our mini testers, plus the flip dome-shaped top not only keeps things clean but also provided a magical experience. We did find the straw a little on the slim side, not allowing our testers to guzzle up quite so much, but storing 400ml meant there was plenty to keep them hydrated. Made from Tritan plastic, it's built to last too.

Buy now



**Zwilling bottle 350ml drinking bottle, 350ml £15.95,
[Zwilling.com](https://www.zwilling.com)**

Our dinosaur fanatics were more than happy to take this bottle on their adventures. Out of all the bottles we tested it's the most slimline, making it easy to pop into the side of a bag or add to a lunch bag. It may be slim but it's mighty too, made of robust stainless steel holding 350ml of fluids. Unlike many designs, there's no built-in straw, which did slow refuelling down but our testers didn't grumble, plus they were too busy wowing over the push button opening mechanism. It's leakproof, has a non-slip base and there's a safety lock to prevent accidental opening.

Buy now

The verdict

While it's the plainest of those we reviewed, the stainless steel **funterer from Thermos** is a great all-rounder. Not only is it brilliant for keeping water cool, which ensured our testers kept topping up throughout the day, it comes in at less than £20, features a fun opening mechanism and was a doddle to drink from.

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‘She knows she’s different, she knows she’s special’

Oscar-nominated actor Samantha Morton on playing French monarch Catherine de Medici in ‘The Serpent Queen’ on TV and the parallels with her own life. Words: **Helen Brown**



Morton: ‘Film 4 just wants to make comedies and films with Shane Meadows’ (Vivien Killilea/Getty Images for IMDb)

“I don’t believe I have any more power now than I did at 22,” says Samantha Morton. “And I didn’t have any power then.”

That's a startling statement to process after watching the 45-year-old's regal performance in *The Serpent Queen*, during which she wields power with terrifyingly casual control and cruel smirks, as heads roll on her command. She stars as Catherine de Medici, the Italian merchant's daughter who became queen of France in 1547, gradually acquiring a reputation as one of the most brutal and calculating European rulers of the period.

The crisp and witty feminism of the new Starz series highlights the misogynistic myths that history has spun around the "Medici Bitch" (who wasn't conventionally pretty or submissive and did not conceive a child in the first decade of her marriage). But it doesn't patronise its heroine by attempting to reinvent her as a misunderstood goody.

"She's more complex than that," says the Nottingham-born Golden Globe winner. "From the day she was born, everyone was out to kill her. She was orphaned as a baby [her parents died of syphilis] and taken in by her grandmother, who then also died. She grew up in a convent in Italy where her family name was mud. She arrived in France at 14 and – for different reasons – found she was not welcome there either. Her survival depended on her cleverness and her ability to watch and listen."

Morton pauses. "People may be drawn into this show by the idea that it's a costume drama, but the deeper they get into the darkness, the more they'll realise it has more in common with a series like *Succession* or a film like *Goodfellas*."

It was costume dramas in which Morton made her name. She graduated from small-screen, teen roles in ITV series *Soldier Soldier* and *Boon* to a bigger part in Andrew Davies's 1996 adaptation of *Emma* and the lead in Robert Young's 1997 adaptation of *Jane Eyre*. American directors engaged with the self-contained intelligence locked behind her grey-blue gaze. Steven Spielberg cast her as a shaven-headed clairvoyant kidnapped by Tom Cruise in *Minority Report* (2002), and she was Oscar-nominated for *In America* the following year. But she was back in a corset in 2004 starring opposite Johnny Depp and John Malkovich in *The Libertine* and as Mary Queen of Scots in *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2006). That same year, she became

known for taking darker roles, playing the Moors murderer Myra Hindley in the TV film *Longford*, for which she received a Bafta nomination. Although families of Hindley's victims criticised her for bringing the killer more attention, Morton said she felt it was her duty as a performer to "raise issues we're afraid to look at". Most recently she was chilling as villainous zombie Alpha in *The Walking Dead*.



Morton as Catherine de Medici in 'The Serpent Queen' (Starz)

The Serpent Queen's writer, Justin Haythe, tells me he thinks Morton "is a genius, one of the greatest actors of her generation". He says that Catherine could only have been embodied by someone who could emulate her inherent mystery. "I think Sam has a depthless quality to her that makes you look, and look, and look. There's a quality of outsidership to Sam. She's always singular."

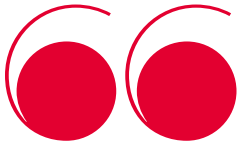
Speaking to me via video link, an off-duty Morton looks almost as stately as her character, wrapped in a huge dressing gown with a stiffly raised white collar, which recalls a ruff. "I am wearing a dress under this," she grins, giving me a quick flash of frock, "but the air-conditioning in this hotel room is freezing!" But she also uses the extra layer as both comforter and armour when I ask her about the parallels between her own history and that of her character. She draws it tightly around herself as she concedes that "there are some obvious similarities, yes... But I

don't draw on any of that. It might be in my DNA, somewhere. But it's not like I go: mmmm, I remember..."

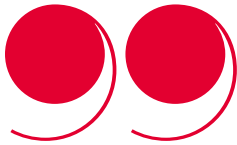
Born in 1977, Morton is the third child of a couple who divorced in 1979. She lived with her alcoholic father until she was eight, when she was made a ward of court because neither of her parents could care for her and her siblings. She has described her father packing salad cream sandwiches in a Sunblest bag and sending her out for whole days, telling her to "come back when it's dark". Her mother was involved in a violent relationship with her second husband, which made it impossible for Morton to live with her again. So she spent the next nine years in foster care and children's homes: an experience she explored in her Bafta-winning directorial debut *The Unloved* (2009).

"Catherine de Medici was an orphan," says Morton. "I wasn't an orphan but I didn't have access to my parents in the traditional fashion." She does concede that she relates to Catherine's struggle to learn the rules of different courts, as her character is bounced from the hypocrisies of Catholic Rome (where she's shown spitting into the drink of her uncle the Pope, played by a scheming Charles Dance) to the more overt licentiousness of the French court. "When you've had lots of different foster homes with different religions, they eat differently at different houses. Different homes have different rules... It's all kind of... well, it can be a challenge."

Like Catherine, Morton was a watcher. "As a kid," she said on *Desert Island Discs* in 2020, "I used to watch people on the bus – how they smoke their cigarettes, how they move their head, how they listen, how they get off the bus and walk down the street. Have they just had some news, what's their morning been like? Are they happy? Are they sad? Why have they got their hands in their pockets? I'm just constantly asking questions about people."



Without sounding like a twit, I honestly can't say I've ever sought revenge



Morton thinks that it was “defiance” that drove Catherine. “She has a calling. She knows she’s different, she knows she’s special. She’s bright. She was a mathematician, an astronomer, she designed incredible gardens. She had visions and a relationship with Nostrodamus...”

Although not especially religious, Catherine de Medici was superstitious from childhood. She took an astronomer with her to France and when she was struggling to become pregnant, she is believed to have tried every trick in the book, including drinking mule’s urine and placing cow dung and ground stags’ antlers on her “source of life”. After 10 years of having her fertility publicly scrutinised, she gave birth to a son named Francis in 1544, and nine more children followed.

Morton tells me that when Catherine’s husband died “she was the first queen to wear black in mourning. I didn’t know that! I thought that began with Queen Victoria centuries later. People scorned Catherine because white was the traditional colour of mourning in France at that time, but she followed her own family tradition.”

While other period dramas luxuriate in historical fashion for its own sake, *The Serpent Queen* shows how clothes were used as power plays. “We still see this going on today with Kim Kardashian,” says Morton. “Or somebody like Meghan Markle making a statement by wearing red. Mary Queen of Scots wore

red when she was murdered.” (Mary wore a black dress to her execution, but it was removed by her maids before her death, to reveal a crimson velvet petticoat, red sleeves and crimson-brown satin bodice – red being both the colour of blood, and the liturgical colour of martyrdom in the Catholic Church.)

While Morton admires Catherine’s strategic mind, she admits she found her fixation on vengeance “more tricky”. I push her on this, because in her *Desert Island Discs* interview she described how – under the influence of drugs, aged 14 – she had threatened to kill another girl with a knife, believing the other child to be a bully who had pimped out a nine-year-old boy. The incident led to an 18-week sentence at an attendance centre. “I was mortified,” she told the BBC’s Lauren Laverne. “And I’m sorry to her. We were all abused. She was a child herself. Nobody looked after us properly. We were rioting in that home because they were locking the fridges at night. We were not safe.”

I wonder if she’s blanking this out now when she tells me: “Without sounding like a twit, I honestly can’t say I’ve ever sought revenge. I’ve felt absolute horror and grief and confusion when human beings do awful stuff, either to society or to each other. I’ve never had that kind of desire to have personal revenge. I’ve always believed that it all comes out in the wash, that you have to be careful what you sow.”



An Oscar-nominated Morton, alongside Paddy Considine, in 'In America' (Moviestore/Shutterstock)

But I feel the truth of her faith in “the forgiveness of which I am capable”. Nobody has ever been charged over the “violence, sexual abuse, torture...” she has described experiencing in her youth and she has never pursued prosecutions. Today she is keen to differentiate between Catherine’s love of revenge and her own desire for justice. “I’ve always been somebody who wants that.”

But it’s not the abusers of the past who make Morton angry when we talk. It’s the Channel 4 bosses of the present. She tells me that *The Unloved* was the first in a trilogy of films she has written about the care system. But she can’t even get the people at Film 4 to read the scripts of the second two. “*Starlings* is about leaving care and being placed in a homeless hostel. Then my third film is about the perspective of a parent having a child taken away from them and fighting social services. That’s called *Pamela* and it’s based on my mother. If people read the scripts and didn’t like them I’d say fair dos. But there’s no interest. Film 4 just wants to make comedies and films with Shane Meadows.”

The subject ought to be brought to the fore. In 2020, children’s charity Barnardo’s warned of a “state of emergency” in the foster system, while local government sources have warned that a series of factors risk combining to cause a fresh crisis. Increased poverty as a result of both the pandemic and the cost of living crisis leads experts to anticipate a recruitment deficit of around 25,000 foster-care families by 2026, according to analysis by the Social Market Foundation.

Morton shakes her head at her powerlessness to publicise the issue. She says it’s not as though *The Unloved* was a worthy social issues film that failed to pull in viewers. “We won a Bafta! We got the highest viewing figures ever for Channel 4 [two million].” When I tell her she might need to channel some Medici-type skills to get her scripts to the top of the pile, she agrees, forcefully.

“Yes!” she enthuses. “Yes I do. But that’s why I’m talking to you and maybe I can shame them into doing something!”

‘The Serpent Queen’ premieres today on Starzplay

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‘Speculating about Bond is essentially a national hobby’

Kim Sherwood is the first woman to pick up the 007 mantle with her electrifying thriller ‘Double or Nothing’. She talks to **Kevin EG Perry** about British symbolism, myth and fast cars



In her novel, Sherwood presents her own solution to the Bond question (Getty/The Independent)

Kim Sherwood wouldn't make a very good spy. While working on *Double or Nothing* – the first in a new trilogy of thrillers the 33-year-old novelist is writing under the watchful eye of James

Bond creator Ian Fleming's estate – she was sent to test drive the Alpine A110 S. It's a suitably luxurious sports car of the type Bond tends to prefer; the only hitch was that Sherwood doesn't have a licence to drive, never mind a licence to kill. She was also under strict instructions not to reveal to Alpine employees why she was there.

Weaving through the cobbled streets of Edinburgh, the racing-car driver behind the wheel wondered aloud why Sherwood was scribbling down so many notes. "I told him I was writing a book about cars," she remembers, speaking on a video call from her home in Bath. "It seemed like the easiest thing to say, but then he turned to me and said: 'But you can't drive?'" She laughs. Busted. "That's true," she stammered back. "It's a very limited book."

While Sherwood might not be the writer you'd want working on an encyclopaedia of automobiles, she was exactly who the Fleming family were looking for to solve their modern-day quandary: how does Bond fit into the world in 2022? After last year's *No Time to Die* gave the Daniel Craig era of films a resoundingly final chapter, rumours have abounded about what the future might hold for the much-loved character. Would producers change 007's ethnicity or gender? Maybe not. The latest gossip out of Pinewood suggests that the next onscreen Bond will simply be "younger and taller" than Craig's version.

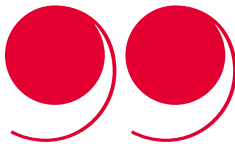
In *Double or Nothing*, Sherwood presents her own novel solution to the Bond question: get rid of him. At the outset of the book, 007 is missing, presumed kidnapped by a nefarious private military company known as Rattenfänger. In the aftermath of Bond's disappearance, we follow his 00 colleagues at MI6 as they scour the globe.

There's 003 Johanna Harwood, a former trauma surgeon and, perhaps inevitably, an old flame of Bond's. She finds herself in a love triangle with another agent: a brilliant mathematician, Sid Bashir, who goes by the code name 009. Also on Bond's trail is Joseph Dryden, 004, a former Special Forces soldier who was injured in Afghanistan and has since been given a brain implant that links him to MI6's quantum computer, Q. Around this new

team, Sherwood populates *Double or Nothing* with many familiar figures from Fleming's original books. Some have graduated to new roles. Moneypenny, for example, has been promoted from faithful secretary to head of the 00 section.



In 'From Russia with Love', Fleming is pointing and saying: 'Look, did you see what I did? I made a myth of Britain. Now let's see if I can destroy it'



In total, Fleming wrote 12 novels and two collections of short stories in the Bond series – a number long since outpaced by the 25 Bond films brought to the screen by Eon Productions. Since Fleming's death in 1964, the task of keeping Bond alive on the page has fallen to a lengthy list of authors including Kingsley Amis, Sebastian Faulks and Anthony Horowitz.

Sherwood, whose award-winning debut novel *Testament* was published in 2018, had long dreamt of following in their footsteps. She got her first taste of Fleming's Bond while growing up in north London, aged 12. "You ask yourself: 'Is it OK that I'm reading this?'" she remembers. "It's an adult world, not only because of the sex and the violence but also because there's a darkness to the character. There's also the existentialism of the Cold War. It feels like you're being let into this secret adult world."

After winning over the Fleming family with tales of her lifelong Bond fandom, Sherwood set about investigating what that secret world might look like today. "That was really good fun to research – although at points disturbing, because of what's going

on!” she says. “Of course, Fleming had first-hand experience in naval intelligence, but I looked at the kind of things he was interested in and used that as a blueprint.” *Double or Nothing* also features a billionaire antagonist called Sir Bertram Paradise, who has developed a machine with which he plans to control the weather – and thus profit from the climate crisis.

“A lot of the technology that Fleming writes about was cutting-edge,” explains Sherwood. “It had either just happened or was about to happen. So I looked at some of the technology that’s being used by intelligence organisations now, like quantum computing; 004’s computer-brain interface came from sort of cobbling together five different things that are being developed and thinking: what if you put all that together?”

With fast cars and ingenious gadgets all reassuringly in place, *Double or Nothing* also wrestles with more philosophical questions about Bond’s – and by extension Britain’s – place in the world. At one point, 007 is described as “the poster boy for a waned empire”. In a pivotal scene, Harwood is taunted about her love for Bond by a Rattenfänger operative. “You have swallowed his myth like a child swallows medicine,” he tells her. “All of your country’s strength lies in myth – the myth of empire, the myth of Churchill, the myth of Scotland Yard and Sherlock Holmes. The myth of James Bond.”



Sherwood poses with a collection of Ian Fleming's original Bond novels (Harper Collins)

Sherwood says this passage was inspired by a scene in Fleming's fifth Bond novel, *From Russia with Love*, published in 1957, in which the Russians plot to destabilise Britain. "They're talking about demoralising the nation, so they want to attack a symbol of Britain," explains Sherwood. "They decide that the Secret [Intelligence] Service, like Churchill and Sherlock Holmes, is a symbol of Britain, and that if you destroy the myth, you bring down the country."

With Bond, Fleming was telling his own story about what Britain represents. "Bond was created in a time of rationing," points out Sherwood. "It was a time of real hardship, and

bleakness, and of significant change in the British empire, when most countries were gaining their independence. Fleming invents this character who has close ties with Jamaica, who flies all over the world, who eats these luxurious foods and drinks luxurious wines. He really is a kind of fantasy and a symbol of what had been lost, which Fleming set up right from the beginning.”

Even in those early novels, Fleming was already pulling apart and testing his own creation. “In *From Russia with Love*, Fleming is kind of pointing and saying: ‘Look, did you see what I did? I made a myth of Britain. Now let’s see if I can destroy it.’”

That tension runs like connective tissue through *Double or Nothing*, a novel in which 007 is a constant presence despite his physical absence. We see Bond instead from the perspectives of multiple characters: old colleagues Money Penny, Felix Leiter and Bill Tanner; ex-lovers such as Harwood; and adversaries like Rattenfänger. “I love those moments where we see Bond from the outside,” says Sherwood. “It reflects what we do as a nation. Speculating about Bond is essentially a national hobby, so I wanted to bake that into the story.”

As for Britain, the country that emerges in the pages of *Double or Nothing* is a proud and heroic one, able to build on its existing myths to find its role in a post-Brexit world. “It’s a vision of Britain that cares about things like the climate crisis and about protecting other people, not just our own interests,” says Sherwood, who is set to publish the next instalment of her trilogy in 2023 before concluding it the following year. “I think that’s what Bond represents in many ways because he’s a global hero. He’s not MI5, he’s MI6. He’s out in the world, and he’s globally beloved. It would make me happy if I can get across to readers that Bond represents an inclusive, caring Britain.”

‘Double or Nothing’ by Kim Sherwood is out now

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DIVIDED WE FALL

The horrors of British India's partition are shown in 'Silence' and Atri Banerjee's production of a modern classic delivers



Lef to right: 'Who Killed My Father', 'The Glass Menagerie' and 'Silence' (Jan Versweyveld/Marc Brenner/Manuel Harlan)

The stage at Manchester's Royal Exchange was lit up by neon this week, while punchmarks on the wall surrounded the Young Vic's new show. Here's our guide to the week's biggest openings in the world of theatre. Next week we'll be reviewing new plays

at Hampstead and the Almeida, as well as the return of Moira Buffini's *Handbagged*, which imagines the late Queen's meetings with Margaret Thatcher.



Jay Saighal and Bhasker Patel in 'Silence' (Manuel Harlan)

Silence – Donmar Warehouse ★★☆☆☆

The horrors of the partition of British India are laid bare in *Silence*, a play that employs the powerful testimony of those who lived through it in 1947.

At the start of Abdul Shayek's moving production, we find the young journalist Mina pitching "her dream commission" to her editors, who appear more interested in their lunch than in the stories she hopes to share about Partition survivors.

Mina hears from Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus – all of whom have long called Britain home. They painfully describe the massacres they witnessed and praise the acts of bravery they encountered decades earlier. However, her own father, whose recollections she most wants to hear, initially refuses to open up.

When he eventually does, *Silence* reaches its crescendo. Assured acting and poignant images projected onto cloth screens combine to moving effect, but the script could occasionally do more to bring to life the drama of the present-day journalistic enquiry. *Rory Sullivan*



Rhiannon Clements in 'The Glass Menagerie' (Marc Brenner)

The Glass Menagerie – Royal Exchange ★★★★★☆

At last, Atri Banerjee's production of Tennessee Williams's play sees the light of day: it was due to be staged in spring 2020. While the cast and team have re-assembled, Banerjee and designer Rosanna Vize completely reworked their plans, to take into account what we've all been through since then.

It's true that this portrait of an isolated, claustrophobic family – stuck in a small St Louis flat but each really living within their own dream world – now has a freshly poignant tug on the old heartstrings. But the biggest change to this production appears to be the highly literal reminder of how the promise of a brighter life remains just out of reach for these characters: spinning above the action is a huge neon sign reading "PARADISE". As well as an unignorable reminder of unfulfilled hope, it is also a concrete reference to the Paradise Dance Hall across the street – its music and illumination offering distraction for lives "without any change or adventure". Lighting designer Lee Curran uses the sign, too, to re-enforce emotional states; it glows or dims, spinning faster or slower, in agitation, boredom or honeyed memory.

There's a pathos to the casting of Amanda: Geraldine Somerville made her debut on this stage as Laura in 1989; now she returns as the matriarch. The weight of Amanda's own tragedy doesn't

always land, but Somerville delivers her cloying, delusional performance of Southern manners, all fluttering and fluting, and brings out the wince-inducing comedy of the text. As does the brilliant Joshua James, who makes Tom withering and acerbic, newly minting many lines as laugh-out-loud funny. Add Eloka Ivo's sexy heat and careless flirtiness as Jim, the longed-for gentleman caller, and it all adds up to a crackling production – casting a new, neon light on Williams's play. *Holly Williams*



Hans Kesting in 'Who Killed My Father' (Jan Versweyveld)

Who Killed My Father – Young Vic ★★☆☆☆

Even before Dutch actor Hans Kesting walks on stage, it's clear that this one-person show won't make for easy viewing. The set is oppressively sparse, containing only a television, a bed and punch marks on a black wall.

Adapted from a book by Edouard Louis, *Who Killed My Father* is a son's look at the poverty, alcoholism and violence that plague his family in France. And at the homophobia and belittlement he is routinely subjected to. The play reimagines Louis's unflinching autobiographical novel, which became a bestseller in his native country.

In an interval-less 90 minutes, Kesting juggles the psychological pain of his character's childhood with the rage he later develops at the injustice of French society. His acting is physically strong

and highly emotive, but the vocal shifts he uses to mimic different family members can sometimes be confusing because they are not very pronounced.

Ivo van Hove's direction can seem a little overblown in its use of background soundtracks and thick cigarette smoke. With Kesting's talents, words alone would often suffice to show the claustrophobic frustration of the protagonist's early life. *RS*

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BLOWING UP A STORM

The professional whistler Molly Lewis is an old-school Hollywood hero we all need. **Leonie Cooper** meets her



Lewis's wryly camp tiki-bar blues is quite unlike anything else (Logan White)

One of the greatest remaining bastions of Hollywood's golden age, Musso & Frank has been beloved of everyone from Frank Sinatra and Marilyn Monroe to Tom Waits and Rickie Lee Jones. The latest star to call herself a regular at the storied restaurant is

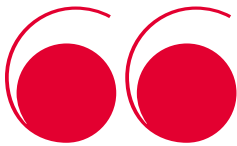
North America's premiere whistler, Molly Lewis. It's a fitting match, as Lewis's unique, wryly camp confection of tiki-bar blues is quite unlike anything else that's been released since the heady days of the 1950s exotica boom. Lewis's high-pitched birdsong is endlessly fascinating, sounding not unlike ear-piercing coloratura soprano Yma Sumac, who was the whistle-toned Ariana Grande of her day. Want a musician who seems like they might soundtrack Quentin Tarantino's next movie? Molly Lewis is your woman.

I meet Lewis on a sticky summer's evening at the infamous Los Angeles hideaway, ahead of the release of her second EP, *Mirage*. She regularly performs at her own fabulous "Cafe Molly" club nights, where she'll whistle spaghetti western soundtracks, Bond themes and her own compositions, as well as share the stage with the likes of actor-musician John C Reilly and slacker rocker Mac De Marco. But just how did she end up as a professional whistler, not least one who has collaborated with names as varied as Dr Dre, fashion house Chanel and Karen O of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs?

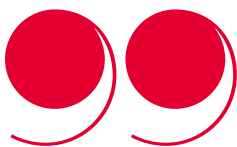
The answer, says the 32-year-old, is by accident. "My friend Nora was putting on a performance art night," she explains, lifting a martini to her lips. "Whistling was something my friends knew I did well, and she asked me to do a song. I was like, ah..." Lewis actually didn't take too much convincing. She'd already appeared at an open mic night at the Kibitz Room, a low-lit bar in the back of the LA deli Canter's, and was up for giving it another go. "It was fun to surprise some people, but I didn't in any way think it was a possible career," she says. "It was just something that I loved doing."

Yet what seemed like a novelty turn quickly became a serious proposition. "Every little thing would lead to something else," she says. It wasn't long until her occasional appearances caught the eye of independent record label Jagjaguwar and in 2021, she released her debut EP, *The Forgotten Edge*. Six tracks of hypnotic, Ennio Morricone-inspired originals, it turned her otherworldly whistle from quirky sideshow to headline talent.

Despite her American twang, Lewis was born in the small town of Mullumbimby in New South Wales, Australia. When she was a child, her parents moved to LA to pursue careers in the movie industry – before she was born Lewis’s father had helped French high-wire artist Philippe Petit scale the World Trade Center, a fantastical feat later retold in the 2008 documentary *Man on Wire*. Lewis, however, was largely oblivious to her starry upbringing. “It’s funny growing up in Hollywood,” she explains. “I was too young to really know certain things. David Lynch was a father at my elementary school, and I was like, ‘whatever’.” When she was 13, the family moved back to Australia, and there Lewis became strangely enchanted by a 2005 documentary *Pucker Up*, which warmly detailed an annual International Whistling Competition in North Carolina. She would eventually attend as an eager wannabe whistler in 2012. Yet it would be almost a decade until she’d be able to call herself a pro. Upon graduating with a film studies degree from the University of Sydney, she spent her early twenties in Berlin.



It was fun to surprise some people but I didn’t in any way think it was a possible career. It was just something that I loved doing



“I made the mistake of telling a journalist once that those were my techno years, but I was joking and they wrote that up!” Rather than endless raving – or even occasional whistling – Lewis was babysitting, working at a cafe and enjoying the aimless drift of the city. “But after a certain point I was like, what am I doing apart from having cheap beers in the park?”

Lewis relocated to Los Angeles and got the kickstart she was craving. After working in the legal department of *American Idol*, Lewis scored a job with a commercial director and began to embed herself in the artsy underworld of the city. “At that point there were things going on every night – so much fun stuff,” remembers Lewis.

But it was the release of *The Forgotten Edge* that really changed the course of Lewis’s life. What was once an underground eccentricity was now a cult concern and the debut EP also brought with it a host of outlandish international appearances. “I get some very strange requests in my DMs – but not from boys,” she says of the direct messages she receives via Instagram. There have been invitations to perform Handel’s “Sarabande” with the Orchestre National de Paris at French lingerie shows while surrounded by BMX bikers, and offers to entertain the glitterati during Chanel dinners at the Cannes Film Festival. There’s even been a trip to the Yuz Museum in Shanghai where she performed draped in Gucci. “I felt like a pop star,” beams Lewis.

Somehow, in among all the globetrotting – a peek at her Instagram shows that her last performance was a candlelit concert on a ridiculously scenic Greek island, as well as recent turns at vintage Mexico City dance halls – Lewis found the time to make a second EP. *Mirage* transplants her dreamy sound to a fabulous fictional land, this time with accompaniment by master South American guitarist Rogê. “When we were making music together I was thinking of it as being from this imaginary place, this island in between our musical worlds,” explains Lewis of the Brazilian-inspired compositions. “I love fantasy,” she adds. “For a while, I wanted to have a *Lord of the Rings*-style map on the back cover.”

Alongside a cover of 1940s jazz standard “Nature Boy”, the release offers an idiosyncratic look at Lewis’s varied interests, including the peculiar fringes of popular science; the atmospheric “Dolphinese” draws on her obsession with the controversial John Lilly Dolphin House experiment of the 1960s. Lewis is also able to delve into her fascination with film, crafting elaborate music videos on a shoestring budget,

including a spy thriller-like promo for “Cabana de Mel”, for which she snuck into LA’s ritzy Bonaventure Hotel, location for Nineties blockbuster *True Lies*.

“There’s double-crossing, there’s an underwater scene, there’s a helicopter, there’s guns,” she explains. The video for “Miracle Fruit”, too, is a living tribute to another classic Hollywood moment. Alongside a floppy-haired “hunk”, Lewis salsas on a floating platform in a soft focus fever dream, using body doubles in tribute to Leslie Nielsen and Priscilla Presley in *Naked Gun 2½*. “There’s a scene in that where they kind of go off into the background a little and he throws her in the air and she goes between his legs and flips around and I thought, ‘Let’s do that!’” And with that, Lewis drains her second cocktail and heads off to the Hollywood Bowl for a night of Dvorak. Whoever said old Hollywood was dead?

‘Mirage’ is out on Friday digitally and on vinyl and CD on 28 October

Molly Lewis plays Joe’s Pub in New York on 24 September and Laylow in London on 3 November

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THE BIG PICTURE

This year's Venice Film Festival has enjoyed its share of tabloid mayhem but the most engaging drama still happened on screen. **Geoffrey Macnab** reports on the best on offer



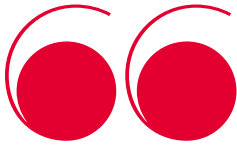
Clockwise from top left: 'Blonde', 'The Banshees of Inisherin', 'Tár' and 'Saint Omer' were among the frontrunners in this year's competition (Netflix/Film4/Universal/Les films du losange)

Now, at the venerable age of 90, Venice is the oldest major film festival in the world. Founded in 1932, the event is still held on the balmy, beach-filled island of the Lido and has a faded

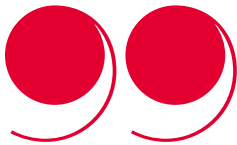
elegance that other events such as Cannes and Berlin simply can't emulate. In the 1930s, the controversies tended to be political. The main award was called The Mussolini Cup. There were furious rows over movies like Jean Renoir's *Grand Illusion*, later banned in Italy for being too left wing, and German director Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia*, which many saw as Nazi propaganda.

The 2022 edition has had plenty of talking points, too, but this time not to do with fascism. Olivia Wilde's *Don't Look Now*, which landed on the Lido midway through the festival like some dangerous UFO with Harry Styles inside, provoked a media feeding frenzy thanks to all the lurid advance reports of feuds and affairs during shooting. Wilde's film wasn't in competition and isn't in the running for The Golden Lion, which was announced yesterday. A pretentious dystopian thriller with a very tangled plot, it wouldn't have won anyway. That honour went to Laura Poitras's documentary *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*, while imprisoned Iranian director Jafar Panahi won the Special Jury Prize for *No Bears* and the Silver Lion went to French director Alice Diop for her courtroom drama, *Saint Omer*.

Documentaries don't usually even make it into the main Venice competition let alone win it, but *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* is stirring, angry and very moving. The film explores how artist/photographer Nan Goldin "took down" the Sacklers, the billionaire American family behind OxyContin, the highly addictive drug which killed tens of thousands during the opioid crisis. It also looks at Goldin's life: the suicide of her sister, her experiences of addiction and sexual harassment – and the fearless way she confronts her own demons in her work.



Joanna Hogg uses all the familiar haunted house tropes – mist, wind, doors that creak, faces seen fleetingly at windows



Goldin's campaign has led to a host of British, as well as American, museums cutting their ties with the Sacklers. "[But] the director of the V&A has kept his allegiance to the Sacklers," Goldin told me. The V&A, then, is one of the few major cultural institutions that hasn't yet shaken off its dependency on Sackler cash or scrubbed the family's now toxic name from its walls.

All the Beauty and the Bloodshed is both an intimate portrait of an artist and a campaigning documentary with a strong polemical thrust. With her Golden Lion behind her, Poitras, who has already won one Academy Award, for her Edward Snowden documentary, *Citizen Four*, is bound to be in the running for another. Many other titles screening over the past 10 days could also have carried off the main prize in what was an unusually rich programme, full of potential Oscar contenders.

The most striking performance was from Cate Blanchett, whose best actress award surprised no one. She was imperious as the female opera conductor in Todd Field's *Tar*. When it comes to playing headstrong and emotionally vulnerable Clytemnestra-like characters, she has few equals. Field's film is very long. At times, as we see Blanchett's Lydia Tar, conducting the Berlin-based Philharmonic or giving exhaustive on-stage interviews to *New Yorker* journalists, the approach seems dry and scholastic. However, the film develops a searing emotional charge as

Lydia's life begins to unravel. She risks being "cancelled" because of politically insensitive remarks she makes to students. Her haughty treatment of young women who work for her provokes a furious backlash.

Beyond Gena Rowlands as the theatre star close to breakdown in John Cassavetes's *Opening Night*, it's hard to think of any other portrayals of female artists under strain that reach the same pitch of ferocious intensity that Blanchett achieves here. She truly is the maestro.



Greta Gerwig (Babette), May Nivola (Steffie), Adam Driver (Jack), Samuel Nivola (Heinrich) and Raffey Cassidy (Denise) in 'White Noise' (Netflix)

Almost as powerful, but in a very different register, was Penelope Cruz in Italian director Emanuele Crialese's coming-of-age drama, *L'Immensità*, set in 1970s Rome. Cruz plays Clara, a middle-class wife and mother with an abusive husband. The story is seen from the point of view of her eldest daughter Andrea, who yearns to be a boy. Cruz's character is child-like herself, a playful, free-spirited woman being ground down by a patriarchal system. As in her melodramas with Pedro Almodovar, Cruz retains her glamour regardless of the blows she receives. The film itself is scattershot and uneven but its Spanish star is as magnetic as ever.

Another very impressive turn from a female lead came from Tilda Swinton in Joanna Hogg's ghost story/family psycho-

drama, *The Eternal Daughter*. Swinton plays two roles – an artist/filmmaker and her elderly mother. Together, they go to stay in a Fawlty Towers-like country house hotel that, many years before, was the mother’s childhood home. Hogg uses all the familiar haunted house tropes – mist, wind, doors that creak, faces seen fleetingly at windows. The plotting is a little contrived, with a strong whiff of M Night Shyamalan’s *The Sixth Sense* or Alejandro Amenabar’s *The Others*. Even so, *The Eternal Daughter* is still a very moving affair. Swinton excels in her dual role. As the older woman, she looks disconcertingly like the pianist mother played by Ingrid Bergman in *Autumn Sonata* – and like Bergman, she brings huge pathos to the part.

The festival opened with Noah Baumbach’s Don DeLillo adaptation, *White Noise*. This was subversive, dark and funny. It boasts arguably Adam Driver’s finest screen performance yet as Jack Gladney, the brilliant professor specialising in Hitler studies at a small town US university. Jack is confronted with a series of ever more apocalyptic events. Driver plays him in wonderfully laidback fashion, facing down each fresh catastrophe with a casual shrug.



Brendan Fraser in ‘The Whale’

Driver put on a little weight to play the part but nothing like the layers of fat that cover Brendan Fraser in *The Whale*, Darren Aronofsky’s chamber piece about an ailing, morbidly obese man

stuck in his apartment, trying to expiate the guilt he feels over his treatment of those closest to him. The premise may not sound enticing but this turned out to be an effective tearjerker.

There were some duds. Florian Zeller's *The Son* was strangely unmoving in spite of its subject matter. This is the story of a troubled teenage boy, Nicholas (Zen McGrath), drifting closer and closer to despair and suicide. His father, a prominent lawyer (Hugh Jackman), is married to his second wife (Vanessa Kirby) and has a baby child with her. Nicholas, though, has never forgiven him for walking out on his first wife Kate (Laura Dern). He has begun self-harming and has played truant from school for months. His parents are helpless to protect him as he slips inexorably toward the abyss. Many parents and adolescents will relate to the story but Zeller tells his grim story in such schematic and predictable fashion that its emotional kick is very faint.

Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's *Bardo* is an attempt to make a deeply personal portrait of the artist in the vein of Federico Fellini's *8 1/2* or Paolo Sorrentino's autobiographical movies. Formally, it is a tour de force, full of elaborate travelling shots like the ones Inarritu used in *Birdman*. While it's brimming with magical realist flights of fancy, it is also horribly self-indulgent – a rambling three-hour epic about a Mexican documentary maker (Daniel Gimenez Cacho) who lives an incongruously lavish *Dolce Vita*-style existence and whose only real obsession is himself.



Farrell and Gleeson in 'The Banshees of Inisherin' (AP)

Most of the British films were well received. Bill Nighy received a standing ovation for his performance as the Mr Benn-like businessman in 1950s London who discovers he has only six months to live in Oliver Hermanus's *Living*. Italian audiences are sometimes baffled by British emotional restraint but they loved the wonderfully quirky and self-effacing way Nighy played Mr Williams, trying to squeeze out some joy and fulfilment from his last few weeks of life. The film was screening out of competition having already shown in Sundance. (Its scriptwriter, novelist Kazuo Ishiguro, was on the festival jury.)

The Venice audience also enjoyed Georgia Oakley's debut feature *Blue Jean*, set in the northeast of England during the 1980s (the dark days of Margaret Thatcher and Section 28) and about the travails of a lesbian PE teacher (the very striking, Jean Seberg-like newcomer Rosy McEwen). Strangely, this was one of several films in Venice that featured either Joy Division or New Order music. Luca Guadagnino made effective use of the former in his cannibal road movie, *Bones and All*, a gory but exquisitely made and very romantic affair starring Timothée Chalamet and Taylor Russell (who won the Best Young Actor award) as the lovers with an appetite for raw flesh.

Guadagnino, who picked up the best director award, emerged from Venice with his reputation yet further enhanced. So did

Martin McDonagh thanks to his magnificent new tragicomedy, *The Banshees of Inisherin* (which won best screenplay). Set on a remote island during the Irish Civil War of the 1920s, the film reunites Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson, who also appeared together as the odd couple in McDonagh's *In Bruges* and could well become Irish cinema's very own answer to Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau. They play neighbours and former best friends, Padraic and Colm. Now, Colm has decided he doesn't actually like Padraic. Both actors are superb (Farrell won best actor) in a film that manages to be mordantly funny while also making subtle points about everything from the nature of male friendship to the causes of political strife.

Outside the main competition, there were also some gems. Israeli director Guy Davidi's poetic but quietly devastating documentary *Innocence* looked at how young Israelis are forced into military service at the age of 18, regardless of their temperaments or beliefs. Davidi doesn't use voice-overs or interviews. Instead, he relies heavily on journals, diaries and video footage from some of the young military recruits who didn't survive their ordeal.

Unlike Cannes, which still regards Netflix and Amazon as a mortal threat to the future of cinema, Venice has no qualms about showing new movies financed by the streamers. This means it gets films like *White Noise* and Andrew Dominik's Marilyn Monroe polarising biopic *Blonde* whose star Ana De Armas wept after receiving a 14-minute standing ovation at the premiere. While other festivals were capsized by the pandemic, Venice sailed blithely onward. Its 2020 and 2021 editions continued almost as normal, as physical events, albeit with fewer visitors. This year, the Lido was again packed to bursting point. Aspects of the festival rankle. The organisers are so obsessed with red carpet glamour that you suspect they sometimes invite films more on account of their star wattage than their aesthetic accomplishments. Even so, if you want to catch a first sight of next March's likely Oscar winners, Venice is still the place to come.

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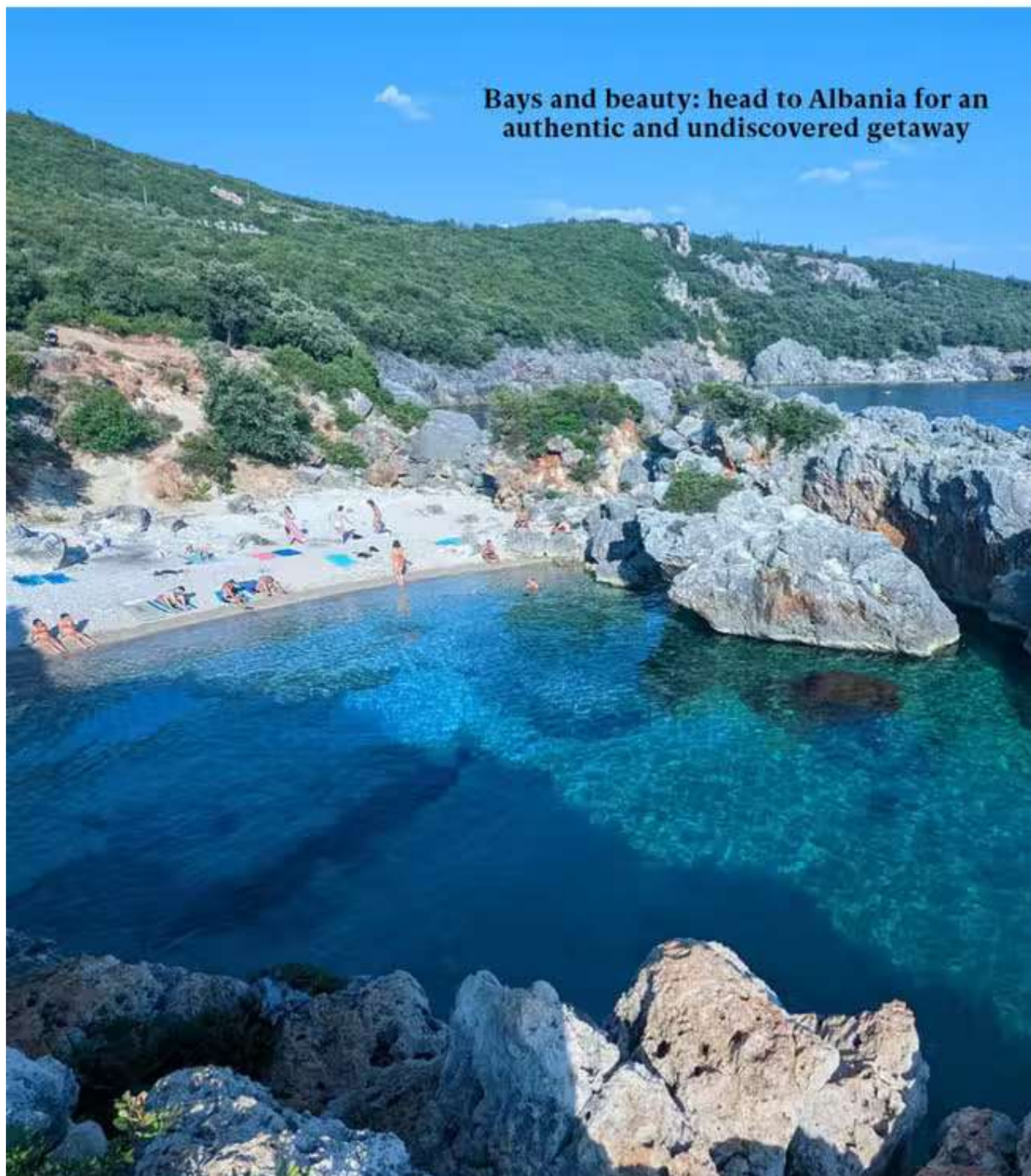
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TRAVELLER

THIS WEEK'S DIGEST OF EXCEPTIONAL JOURNEYS, UNDER-THE-RADAR
DESTINATIONS AND THE HOTTEST HOTELS

**Bays and beauty: head to Albania for an
authentic and undiscovered getaway**





Traveller/ The man who pays his way



A falling pound will hit UK tourists wherever they go

Sterling is at its lowest level against the dollar since 1985 and that could hurt you in a lot of places, writes **Simon Calder**



Cash call: the US is the land of the nickel and dime (Simon Calder)

Crisis? What cost of living crisis? One high-end travel firm evidently believes some customers have more cash than ever. This week Abercrombie & Kent put on sale a holiday that costs £5,450 per day.

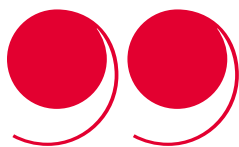
Yes, the 22-day Africa by Private Jet tour, departing September 2023, will cost “from £119,875pp based on two people sharing”. For just over three weeks the participants will fly to Egypt, Rwanda, Tanzania, Botswana, South Africa, Benin and Morocco aboard a privately chartered Boeing 757 with just 48 seats.

Unlike the overland trucks on which some of A&K’s now-prosperous clients might originally have travelled through Africa, in-flight amenities include lie-flat beds, wifi and an espresso machine. Much can happen during a year, of course, and in the small print A&K warns the price might have to increase due to “the exchange rates relevant to the package”.

This week sterling sank to its lowest level against the US dollar since 1985. Even last month, when the pound was about 5 per cent stronger than it is now, my trip through the US Midwest was punctuated by the odd gasps at the cost, in pounds, of a simple lunch or a budget motel. The rate of tipping is on the rise, too. On a restaurant bill in Britain, adding 15 per cent as a tip would seem excessive to most of us. Cross the Atlantic, though, and the figure will be seen as mean in the extreme.



The market signal provided by high oil prices is an essential one, environmentally speaking. But for today’s travellers it is most unhelpful



In the United States (though not yet in Canada), a gratuity of 18 per cent is regarded as grudging – implying the waiter provided merely adequate service, even after he or she went out of their way to gush, theatrically, about tonight’s specials in all their

gastronomic glory. “Tip 20” is the mantra – and even if you perch at the bar, that \$10 bill for a couple of beers requires a \$2 gratuity.

You might even be charged for paying: the excellent District Pub in Eau Claire, Wisconsin (rather hidden, certainly a gem) added a 3.5 per cent “card convenience fee” to my bar bill – with tax levied on that surcharge.

Even if you have no plans to visit the land of the nickel and dime, the slump in sterling will be felt by all British travellers fortunate enough to contemplate venturing abroad. Many costs of aviation, from aircraft leases to fuel, are denominated in dollars. Most big airlines have “hedged” both the price for their near-future fuel needs and the exchange rate against the US currency needed to pay for the kerosene. But those positions are gradually unwinding – resulting in a sharp rise in costs.

The market signal provided by high oil prices is an essential one, environmentally speaking. But for today’s travellers it is most unhelpful. Bear in mind that, from Dubai to the Caribbean, many currencies are locked against the US currency: when sterling falls against the American dollar, it slumps by exactly that proportion against the UAE dirham and the Barbadian dollar. In Latin America and Africa, tourist services are almost always priced in US dollars.

Fifteen years ago, £1 bought \$2.11. Some economists believe the dollar-sterling rate could soon reach parity, ie £1 to \$1. Yet one benefit of a certain longevity is knowing we have been there before – and that, in 1985, we still found joy in travel. The sights, sounds and smiles of Africa are just as rewarding, however much you pay to get there.

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BEST KEPT SECRET

Want an undiscovered corner of Europe with a cracking coast? As **Lucie Grace** finds out, Albania has bays and beauty to rival its brochure-starring neighbours Italy and Greece



A beautiful pebble beach at the foot of mountains on the Adriatic coastline (Getty)

With a mountainous landscape overlooking crystalline waters and relatively sleepy pebble beaches, the Albanian riviera is one of Europe's best-kept secrets. Spending a week whizzing between the coves and corners of the riviera – the catch-all name for Albania's southernmost stretch of coast – was an unexpected delight. Separated from the rest of the country by

the rolling Ceraunian mountains, the region stretches 120 kilometres from Vlore to Sarande, taking in beaches, canyons, castles and characterful little seaside towns. Among other ways it's opened up to tourists, the 2009 rejuvenation of the country's SH8 coastal road made it easier to explore, be it by bike, car or bus – or in my case, a combination of all three.

To try to describe the beauty of these beaches collectively would do them an injustice, but the headlines are: they are blissfully peaceful, with clear, shimmering waters. They are far less frequented by tourists than neighbouring Greece, meaning you'll bag accommodation nearby at much more affordable prices. And unlike in the more jaded parts of booked-out Europe, you'll likely have a host who's genuinely delighted to have you to stay. Albania was cut off from the world for over 40 years, with communist dictator Enver Hoxha breaking ties with Russia as he believed the USSR was too soft. The people here experienced North Korea levels of isolation for a lengthy chunk of the 20th century – locals alone knew how stunning their landscape was. Now they seem enthused to share the secret.



The hillside village of Vuno (Lucie Grace)

Assuming you're flying into Tirana International Airport, any onward travel – be it to the Albanian Alps in the north, Ottoman-era towns in the east or world class beaches in the south – requires either car hire or deciphering the local buses.

As a non car-driver, getting to grips with the buses was my first task.



The people here experienced North Korea levels of isolation for a lengthy chunk of the 20th century – locals alone knew how stunning their landscape was



Staff at my Tirana hotel helpfully tipped me off about local bus schedule website gjirafa Travel, telling me that all journeys are paid for on board, so forget pre-booking. I learned that, if you want to get off at a certain village along the bus route, you can let the driver know before you set off and they'll pull over, even if it's not a formal stop. Once I figured out the etiquette, I boarded a coach at Tirana's north & south bus terminal, headed for the maritime city of Vlore. This is the gateway to the riviera, which I'd stop in before taking the coastal SH8 road towards the other end of it, Sarande.

Using my nifty ask-the-driver trip, I hopped off in Vuno, a postcard-pretty cobblestone village. I quickly spotted its one bar, Bar Lula, run by the inimitable Lula; and one restaurant, Markos, based in a repurposed petrol station. At the latter I tucked into traditional plates of qofte meatballs and grilled fish with vegetables and lashings of tzatziki – all for the princely sum of about £4. Mykonos this was not. The quality of the food here was one of my earliest surprises: huge salads and more fish awaited, along with cheese burek (my favourite Balkan hot pastry dish).

Once I'd settled in, the owner of Vuno's Shotgun Hostel, Bree Cameron, showed me how she has lovingly renovated the period property with her partner, before setting me up with a hire scooter and sending me off to explore. She attributes Albania's recent surge in popularity to word of mouth and the country's laid-back approach to pandemic restriction. "Last year while most European countries were hard to access, Albania was fully open for all to visit. So we saw travellers come from across the world, as well as Balkan countries. The word has spread like this."

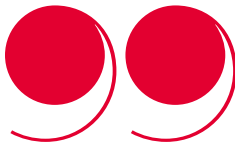


Dhermi village is a splendid sight (Lucie Grace)

Armed with my Viaggio moped, I set out to visit the riviera beaches and towns, mastering the winding mountain roads that provide majestic views at every turn. The lengthy, family-friendly beaches of Borsh and Qeparo were set apart from their villages by fragrant groves of olive and cypress trees. I found that Himare, the closest town south of Vuno, was popular with a young, backpackerish crowd, who stroll about its sea level boulevard with a scattering of great bars, restaurants and boat trip operators.



I tucked into traditional plates of qofte meatballs and grilled fish with vegetables and lashings of tzatziki – all for the princely sum of about £4



I hired a pedalo to visit Himare's hidden neighbour, Filikuri Beach, a pebble-strewn, isolated strand with some of the finest turquoise waters along the riviera. A short drive beyond Himare I stumbled upon Porto Palermo, named after its fortress, which sits defensively on a small island connected to the mainland. The area is a treasure trove of tiny unmarked coves to conquer and laze on, all half-visible from the road.

My favourite bits of coast, though, were the untouched, wilder bays at the north end of Dhermi's beach. I sweated through a bit of a climb to reach its three adjoining, practically empty beaches – thankfully not so taxing that it couldn't be done in sandals. The stunning azure waves were fed by a cold water spring from the mountains, flowing out from under the seabed and making the water invitingly cold, post-scramble.

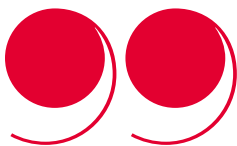


One of the secret, unmarked beaches near Porto Palermo (Lucie Grace)

Chatting to locals, they told me the opposite end of Dhermi beach was famous for its electronic music festivals, such as UK-founded Kala Festival and local Turtle Fest, with the area's bijou beach clubs ramping up to a party setting in certain months. Bruno Brazhda, manager of pretty beach bar Rose by Havana told me that Kala in particular has done wonders for spreading the word about Dhermi's cool, transparent waters.



The stunning azure waves were fed by a cold water spring from the mountains, flowing out from under the seabed and making the water invitingly cold



“Kala brings 2,500 Brits over for a week in June, and they have one more event in September. Word spreads this way,” he

explained, slinging me a local Korca beer. He added that last year the riviera saw an unexpected surge in popularity. “We were so busy here, as locals had nowhere else to go while Greece and Italy were closed. Many Macedonians, Germans and Polish came too.” Being one of the only countries fully open in summer 2021 had its advantages.

And despite the Albanian tourist board saying 2022’s visitor numbers are up by 45 per cent on last year, I struggle to find one beach that feels overtouristed or remotely packed. Even in the last two weeks of July. On of the more set-up coves, Jale Beach, is lined with bars and restaurants, plus neat sun loungers and bamboo umbrellas laid out for punters – yet none are full.

Jale is also home to the luxurious Folie Marine Resort and Club, where ex-navy man turned PADI instructor Elton Rukaj (Ruku to his friends) runs Oazi Blue Diving Centre. He remembers this beach 15 years ago: “There was nothing here at all, no bars or resorts. It was a true paradise.” It’s a good example of how this is a work in progress, a region still in development and on the ascent. If you’re tempted to swap Greece for a trip to Albania’s emptier shores, the time to go is now.

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Visit Amsterdam and leave a small carbon footprint

The Dutch capital has plenty of appeal for eco-conscious travellers, as **James Litston** discovers in this thriving city



Plan an Amsterdam city break with a difference (Getty)

Climate change and rising seas are especially bad news for the Netherlands. With around a third of its landmass lying below sea level, this forward-looking nation has a vested interest in green technologies that might slow the rate at which the world is

warming. A goal of halving greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 has seen huge investment and innovation in making Dutch agriculture, architecture, water management and energy production more sustainable. Meanwhile, a national tourism strategy seeks to promote Dutch cities' green credentials.

For bike-friendly Amsterdam, that means highlighting the joys of exploring the city centre and beyond by bus, tram and train. It means choosing sustainable places in which to eat, drink and stay. And it means balancing the benefits and burdens of tourism so that everyone – visitor and local alike – can enjoy the Dutch capital. Here's how...

Stay

Amsterdam's (indeed the Netherlands') most sustainable digs is Hotel Jakarta, which sits on Java Island's redeveloped docks, a 20-minute walk from the centre. Ships once sailed from here to Holland's colonies in Asia: a heritage that's respected in the hotel's Far East theme. Interiors are mostly crafted from sustainable, fast-growing bamboo; a five-story atrium is filled with tropical plantings; and the restaurant serves Indonesian cuisine. The building itself is energy neutral thanks solar panels, efficiency measures, heat-saving technologies and natural ventilation. Doubles from £170, B&B. hoteljakarta.com



Stay by one of the city's canals (James Litston)

For a more quintessential Amsterdam stay, hit Hotel Pulitzer, which was crafted from 25 interconnected, canal-facing Golden Age townhouses. Encircling a courtyard garden, the hotel blends a historic setting with up-to-date Dutch style that reflects each building's original purpose or occupants (metallic details in Jansz restaurant, for example, are a nod to its former guise as a coppersmith's). Green Globe certification and a ban on single-use plastics are among sustainability initiatives, while a prime Prinsengracht location makes it an ultra-convenient base. Doubles from £295, room only. *pulitzeramsterdam.com*

Eat

The country's more than 100-strong constellation of Michelin stars includes Green Stars that recognise restaurants' commitment to sustainable gastronomy. Among these is Flore, whose "conscious fine dining" approach celebrates ingredients from small Dutch farms and seafood suppliers. With only 11 tables, it's in high demand: book ahead.

Another high-end eatery with an eco twist is De Kas, which takes the notion of farm-to-table dining to the extreme. Almost everything used in the kitchens – from beetroots and melons to hydroponically grown herbs – comes from on-site plots and greenhouses just yards from diners' tables.



Don't miss out on a vegan cake from Pluk (James Litston)

Plant-based palates will find further options across the city centre. Green curry, rendang and Korean fried cauliflower bring an Asian bias to Veganees; or chow down on rainbow-bright delights at Flower Burger. Round it all off with a sweet treat from Pluk; their pretty as a picture vegan chocolate pie tastes as good as it looks.

Head to Malabar, on the 8th and 9th floors of Hotel Jakarta, for drinks. Cocktails here have names (Cape Town, Aruba, Sulawesi) that nod to the Netherlands' colonial past and are best enjoyed with sunset views across the river to Amsterdam's skyline.

Shop

It takes over 7,000 litres of water to produce a single pair of jeans, so an easy step towards greener living is to buy less brand-new stuff. The Dutch psyche, thrifty by nature, lends itself to reusing and recycling – vintage shopping is everywhere in Amsterdam. Start at Waterlooplein's flea market; then head to picture-perfect Negen Straatjes (Nine Streets), where many independent stores have a sustainable slant. Adapt is good for previously loved jeans, shirts and varsity jackets, or browse the much wider selection at Episode. There's also a branch of Nudie Jeans, whose fix-not-throw approach incorporates free-of-charge repairs and a Rebirth collection made from recycled fibres.

Even when buying new, sustainability is as crucial as style. Green Sneaker Store's colourful footwear is made from bio-based materials such as linen, cork, grapes, maize or recycled plastic bottles, a synthetics-free approach that's mirrored just down the street at Allbirds. At Other Circles, sunglass frames come in Dutch-made designs using biodegradable acetate or pressed-wood veneers from fast-growing species. There's lots more conscious shopping besides; find further suggestions at cosh.eco.



Set sail on an e-boat (James Litston)

Eco attractions

Waterways are pivotal to the existence of a city that grew up around (and took its name from) a dam on the Amstel River. Explore Amsterdam's central ring of canals on one of Stromma's open-top e-boats (tours last just over an hour and cost €22.50pp). Glide almost silently along, admiring the elegant, 17th-century canal houses, or go one better and join a canal clean-up on a self-powered pedalo.

Beyond its grand canal houses, Amsterdam's other architectural icons are its windmills. Find an impressive collection to the north of the city at Zaanse Schans, whose pretty mills and wooden workshops sit on the edge of open countryside. Get there by boat, bike, train or bus from Centraal Station; a 24-hour Amsterdam Region Travel Ticket for €19.50 (£16.90) covers all public transport needs.



Check out the windmills at Zaanse Schans (James Litston)

Closer to the city, just across the North Sea Canal, lies the emerging precinct of Hembrugterrein: a former munitions factory that's being restored and redeveloped into sustainable housing and cultural attractions. Key among these is Het Hem for its mix of exhibitions (art, photography, sculpture), vegetarian fine dining at Restaurant Bois and a calendar of credible parties and events.

Back in town, get a taste of the Netherlands' most sustainable brand: Tony's Chocolonely, whose chocolate bars are fairly traded, slavery-free and socially impactful. Hit the superstore near Damrak docks to tailor-make your perfect bar and even design bespoke wrapping. It would make an ideal gift were it not too good to give away.

Travel essentials

Getting there: trying to fly less?

If you're able to travel via central London, Eurostar offers by far the greenest way to get to mainland Europe: it would take 13 Eurostar journeys to match the carbon emissions of just one flight. High-speed trains depart from St Pancras and reach Amsterdam in just under four hours; one-way fares from £39pp.

Ferries offer alternative flight-free routes to the Netherlands: try Stena Line from Harwich or DFDS from Newcastle.

Fine with flying?

British Airways, KLM, easyJet and Ryanair fly to Amsterdam from the likes of London, Manchester, Norwich, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, with train connections to Centraal Station taking around 20 minutes.

More information

For great value sightseeing, pick up an Amsterdam City Card for admission to museums, attractions and public transport within the city (from €65 for 24 hours). Visit iamsterdam.com; holland.com

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KEEPING IT LOCAL

Soap made in the next town over, ceramics from artisans, straws from your garden – this locally-sourced mindset has made its way into the hotel industry, says **Lucy Thackray**



Rooms at The Black Bull at Sedbergh near the Yorkshire Dales feature throws, carpets and floral displays by small local businesses (Rob Whitrow)

I still remember the scent of a bar of hotel soap I'll probably never be able to get my hands on again. It was at the Ritz-Carlton Phulay Bay resort in Thailand, and it was made from rice milk. Rubbed between your palms, it sent up the comforting, creamy smell of simmering rice found all over this beautiful

nation, infusing the moment with a sense of place I can snap back to at will, even today. I'd bet you anything that soap was either homemade or sourced nearby.

This was in 2014, which would make the Ritz-Carlton a little ahead of its time. Eight years on, stocking your hotel with products made by and representing the local community is a serious trend. The shift towards hyper-local and “slow” food – minimising importing miles and carbon emissions – is no secret, with nearby farms regularly shouted-out on breakfast menus (ideally your crashpad grows its own veggies right on site, with extra points for zero-waste concepts). But the all-local trend has grown to cover amenities such as hotel toiletries, furnishings, bar stock and even gift shop trinkets.



This trend is being largely spurred on by boutique, independent and luxury hotels, which have taken notice of two things guests appreciate: a personal touch and an eye on sustainability



It's being largely spurred on by boutique, independent and luxury hotels, which have taken notice of two things guests appreciate: a personal touch and an eye on sustainability. You'll spot local gins and liqueurs popping up in hotel bars; locally designed furniture in lobbies; and smatterings of artworks created by local talent or resident creatives.

Some hotels are obsessed with keeping as many things local as possible. Austrian ski pad Naturhotel Forsthofgut serves drinks with straws that are quite literally straw, picked from its own

land. It has an “R50” stamp on its menus to highlight produce that comes from within a 50km radius, and all water used for drinking and bathrooms comes from its own spring on the premises. Somewhat quirkily, all guests are also given an organic potato pack from a neighbouring farm.



‘Petrichor’ scented soap was created specifically for The Black Bull hotel in Sedbergh by a small local business (The Bull, Sedbergh)

At Yorkshire Dales hideaway The Black Bull at Sedbergh, the owners commissioned Sedbergh Soap Co to create a bathroom scent especially for them – named Petrichor, the word for the smell of earth after the rain. They also installed Herdwick wool carpets from Sedbergh-based Wools of Cumbria, room fabrics by nearby Laura’s Loom, and tasked a local blacksmith with creating cooking areas and griddles. In this way, involving the community in a hotel project – and telling guests about their craft – can be both luxurious and revenue-generating for an area.

Even the well-trodden area of local food is still evolving.

Berkshire hotel The Retreat at Elcot Park hosts a monthly farmers market full of stalls from local Newbury businesses, while at The Holcombe, Somerset, owner Alan Lucas is on a mission to proudly list a nearby supplier for every item in the building: milk and butter from Longman’s Dairy in nearby North Cadbury, flowers from Fosse Farm a 20-minute walk away, beer from Butcombe Brewing Co, 20 miles west.

Alan says: “We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint and believe every business should be doing as much as it can to stay sustainable. Sourcing locally, producing our own food and having sustainable operations is a critical aspect of our ethos; people increasingly look to hotels that are operating in an ethical way.”



The Holcombe in Somerset sources as much from its own garden as possible, followed by dairies, butchers and florists in nearby villages (The Holcombe)

Once you spot a trend like this, you suddenly see it everywhere. During two separate visits to the Cotswolds this summer, I fell in love with a brand I'd never seen before, 100 Acres – first in the facilities of a glamping site, then at the delightful pub-with-rooms the Double Red Duke. On enquiring at the second, I realised it was a Cotswolds brand, made with English country garden scents such as geranium, lavender and sage just 35 miles from the Duke's doorstep.

In more far-flung spots, recent Argentinian opening Explora El Chalten created its look by buying in locally made earthen ceramic tableware, crafted from Tierra del Fuego stone by a women's co-operative. The team also sourced bath products made locally with a unique, citrussy Patagonian herb, paramela, as well as Patagonian wines and spirits from small local producers. “The regions we operate in are so remote, the people there often solely rely on tourism,” explains the team.

This is one of those trends that's inherently a good thing – for both the punter and the community. On top of the “surprise and delight” factor for guests, introducing them to the fruits of the area, making use of local produce is one of the criteria for becoming a B Corp – a stamp of sustainability Explora, among others, holds.



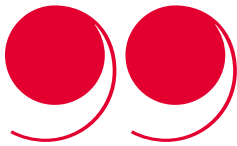
The ceramics at Explora Chalten are made using local stone by a women's cooperative (Lucy Thackray)

“The B Corp movement is a community of companies devoted to business as a force for good. It's a commitment to improve our impact in the spheres of community, environment, customers, and workers, all of whom are very important stakeholders for the travel industry,” says Explora's sustainability director, Juan

Marambio. “Being a B Corp does not imply that a business is perfect, but the certification is a commitment to improve your impact in every possible way.”



On top of the ‘surprise and delight’ factor for guests, introducing them to the fruits of the area, making use of local produce, is one of the criteria for becoming a B Corp



Ethical specialists Responsible Travel point me towards Tobago Beach Accommodation, a dedicated eco-resort on the Caribbean island of the same name. Here, the family owners have given their employees a distinct stake in the business, encouraging them to set up official “satellite businesses” under the resort’s name, such as airport transfer services, laundry systems, bakery suppliers and boat trip operators. The resort takes no commission from the fees guests pay to use these local-run services. It’s all about the tourist’s cash going into the pockets of as many locals as possible, rather than people oceans away with no connection to the place.

As long as big hotel brands are still importing luxury products from halfway across the planet – you’ll still see a lot of Parisian brand names in New York and Middle Eastern hotels, for example – it’s clear the local-first approach hasn’t by any means spread everywhere. But if hotel fans can take note of and reward the stays, sending cash back into their hometowns, perhaps we can make it a worldwide phenomenon.

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Escape to the country

We sell the dream of a destination but, asks **Helen Coffey**, what happens when we actually fall for our own sales pitch?



Life's a beach: trading in city for sea in Folkestone (Getty/iStock)

It's a fickle job, being a travel writer. You're compelled to fall in love with a different destination every day, flitting your attention from continent to continent like a bee hopping from flower to flower. You're selling the idea of a place – whether you're the one who's visiting and reporting back on its charms, or

commissioning another writer instead and polishing up their own enticing vision.

I'm used to the sensation of getting my head turned by every country, city or town I cover editorially: the Technicolor picture that good writing can conjure means I feel the tingling spray of the sea on my skin, smell the stomach-rumbling scents of spice-laden street food and hear the shrieks of wildlife though heavily humid junglescape – even if I've never visited the place in question. Every time, I long to be there; to trade in my well-trodden London life for something fresh and new.

This love is no less real for being fleeting, soon to be displaced by whichever destination is next in line for a moment in the spotlight. After all, how can you expect a reader to buy into the vision if you don't believe it yourself?



Every time, I long to be there; to trade in my well-trodden London life for something fresh and new



It's why my most frequent activity when arriving somewhere new is checking the property listings. Within a couple of hours of any given break, I start to believe I could happily live there and begin researching accordingly. This is, of course, a nonsensical pipe dream. Much as I might want to, I physically cannot simultaneously reside in the Isles of Scilly, Rotterdam, the Julian Alps, Marseille, Valencia, Turin, Tangier and Rijeka. My research never translates to reality. Until the one time that it did.

It was 2019 when I first went to Folkestone on a one-day press trip. By the end of that visit – barely six hours in total – I had predictably fallen in love all over again. But this time was different; this time, for some reason, it stuck.

It was the year before the coastal Kent town's most recent Triennial was scheduled to run – a once-every-three-years event when leading artists from around the world are invited to install public artworks, either temporary or permanent – and we were given a tour that took in striking outdoor works by Richard Woods, Tracey Emin, Yoko Ono, Tim Etchells and Antony Gormley. The vast array of pieces around the town add up to form the UK's biggest urban exhibition of contemporary art.



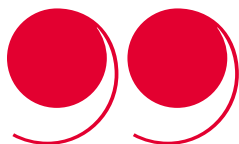
The newly refurbished beach huts in Folkestone, Kent (PA)

Along the way, we stopped for coffee at Steep Street, a cosy, book-lined café serving up generous slabs of cake and honey iced lattes; met charismatic artist Malcolm Allen, aka Whelkboy, in his workshop-slash-gallery in the Creative Quarter to view his latest pieces; and strolled the former train station turned stylish public path, which now plays host to a thriving market on the weekends. We explored the trendy Harbour Arm, with its myriad food and drink stalls, and an iconic champagne bar housed in a former lighthouse. We ate a slap-up lunch at bougie fish restaurant Rocksalt before being shown Sunny Sands, the town's sandy beach – complete with a sculpture inspired by Copenhagen's Little Mermaid statue but modelled on a local woman, staring dolefully out to sea. I did likewise, the water an inviting shade of muted teal despite the overcast sky.

As we made a final tour of the boardwalk, along Folkestone's much longer stretch of pebble beach to the west, the PR joked as I waffled on about how lovely it all was. "Ha! It sounds like you might end up moving here." "Ha!" indeed. Three years later, her quip has come to fruition – I finally managed to buy a house in my new chosen hometown.



I visited Folkestone once, wrote a feature calling it 'cooler than Margate', and my mind was made up



Lots of people have asked me over the last 18 months: why Folkestone? Did I have any connection to it? Know anyone there? Know anything about it at all, in fact? The answer was a not-quite-but-almost resounding no. I visited once, wrote a feature calling it "cooler than Margate", and my mind was made up.

It instantly encompassed a lot of the essentials on my own personal Venn diagram: less than an hour from London by train, seaside location, relatively low (although constantly rising) house prices. It had enough vibey places to eat, drink and be merry, with the aforementioned arts scene the aesthetically exciting cherry on top. But plenty of coastal towns in the southeast of England have had a resurgence over the last five years, from Margate and Deal to Hastings and Worthing. The spike in DFLs – new residents dubbed "Down From Londons" – as Millennials were priced out of the capital was compounded by the pandemic, which saw many of those with office jobs given the flexibility to work remotely and move further afield.



Folkestone's Mermaid looking out on Sunny Sands beach
(Helen Coffey)

This change in demographic can inject previously overlooked areas with investment, creativity and new opportunities – but it has its less palatable downsides. The double-edged sword of gentrification, if not consciously managed, can see locals priced out in favour of developers, investors and second-home-owners who can afford to pay ever-spiralling costs. I'm painfully aware that I am part of the problem – and yet there's no way I could afford to buy a property in London, nor even in the commuter town where I grew up.

Folkestone has one answer to the issue: arts charity Creative Folkestone, part financed by the former chairman of Folkestone-based travel firm Saga Group, Roger De Haan. It bought up scores of derelict buildings around the town and transformed them into spaces for creatives to live and work in. Anyone can apply, and the rents must stay below market rate as part of the charity's remit.



The Lighthouse Champagne Bar on Folkestone's rejuvenated Harbour Arm (Helen Coffey)

In the end, what's my real answer to the question, "Why Folkestone"? Well, some places just get under your skin. Like falling in love with a person, they give the feeling of finally coming home; a curious sensation of, "Wait, haven't we met before?"

Part of me worried about buyers' remorse – that, once my pipe dream was at last a reality, I'd be like that bee, distracted by the next exotic flower. Another week, another "hot new destination" to lure me in. But the weekend after I got the keys to my Folkestone house, my one local friend took me out on the town.

We bounced from sipping still peach ciders at stripped-back bar The Beer Shop, to inhaling the best veggie burger I've ever eaten in a dimly lit booth at London transplant Lucky Chip, then sipped wines at cosy rustic pub The Pullman. The next morning, head just the teeniest bit sore, I cleared away the cobwebs with a stroll to Folkestone beach under a hazy September sun, to submerge myself in the same muted teal water that had bewitched me more than three years ago. I may have fallen for my own sales pitch, but remorse couldn't be further from my mind.

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Where to stay, eat, drink and shop in the Big Apple

You want to get New York City right – whether that's your hotel's neighbourhood, the totally-worth-it dinner bill or the sightseeing shortlist. Let **Lucy Thackray** take you there



Perry Street in New York's West Village (Getty/iStock)

It's both a lifetime must-see and a complex grid of honking cars and rushing commuters, full of potential frustrations. New York City has its own microculture, made up of tip-demanding cabbies, incredible restaurants, brusque deli owners, spendy museums, hedonistic rooftops and straight-off-the-screen sights.

You'll need to do a bit of forward planning to get the best out of it – not least narrowing down the neighbourhoods you want to explore, attractions you want to tick off and booking restaurants that routinely fill up months ahead. But the rewards are dynamite: even a short trip can be packed full of best-ever dinners, late nights, world class culture and only-in-NY moments. At the end of it all, your memories will be vivid (even if your wallet is a little lighter).

What to do

Higher heights

This skyline is the stuff of student posters, movie marketing and migrant dreams the world over. It's worth seeing from a high point. Rockefeller Center's Top of the Rock is pretty good, with a calm, gallery-like space and an audio-visual lift to reach its dizzying heights. But those who are romantic about NY will love the Empire State Building, with its Art Deco detailing and (caged) outdoor viewing deck as seen in a million movies. Seeing a 360-degree view while the wind whips your hair about is the jet-lag wake up call you need (and the observatory is open until 2am for a little past-midnight magic). Adult tickets \$44, children 12 and under \$38, kids under six go free.



The Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Avenue (Getty)

Rich culture

NY's Metropolitan Museum is one of the biggest and best in the world, containing treasures as diverse as couture dresses, medieval church gates and Egyptian temples. Polished, huge and echoing with space, it's an atmospheric walk through the history of the world. Don't miss the airy Greek and Roman sculpture court (Gallery 162), the impressive "Washington Crossing the Delaware" and other Founding Father portraits in the American Wing, and the Frank Lloyd Wright Room, a living room designed by the modernist architect. Adults \$30, children under 12 free.

Take a walk

Half of the fun here is simply strolling around neighbourhoods that, to most, simply look like movie sets or romantic sketches of fire escapes and tree-lined streets. Start with the bohemian West Village, with its weekend cafe culture, moving on to the High Line, running from west-side Hudson Yards down to the Whitney art museum. Leave time for shopping-heaven SoHo and the on-trend Lower East Side. Brooklyn is a whole world of its own, worthy of a whole guide, but nip over if you have the time.

Park life and showtunes

A stroll through Central Park, too, is a must: note how the paths curve and dip, with round boulders and curvaceous lakes. This was an intentional design choice to help New Yorkers living in an angular grid of streets relax and unwind in nature. Aim to pass through it on your way to one of the museums (the stretch of road around the Met is known as "museum mile") or coming from there down to the Broadway theatres. A Broadway show is also a great way to soak up some of this city's world-leading culture scene – if you're not the type to book a front-row seat eight months ahead, look at what's available on the day on last-minute tickets website TodayTix. You can often snap up \$40 tickets to something unexpected, picking them up from a TodayTix rep outside the theatre 30 minutes before showtime.



The 'Jimmy' rooftop at ModernHaus (Nikolas Koenig)

Where to stay

I prefer to stay downtown when I visit NY. For me, the neighbourhoods that huddle south of the Empire State Building (34th Street) – including Chelsea, the West Village, East Village, Lower East Side, SoHo and Tribeca – feel less chaotic, less traffic-heavy, and have a higher concentration of good restaurants and bars than uptown Manhattan. There are of course many more brilliant hotels around tourist centre Midtown and Central Park.

The Moore

This redbrick Chelsea townhouse does only the basics, but with great interior flair. There's a glam Midcentury-styled lobby lounge that does great coffee by day, and a curated wine selection by night. There's a petite rooftop for private evening drinks, and a neat gym for those who need it. Rooms are snug but stylish with a glossy walnut-panelling aesthetic, luxuriant Frette bedding and black-tiled bathrooms with decent power showers. *Doubles from £202, room only. themoorenyc.com*

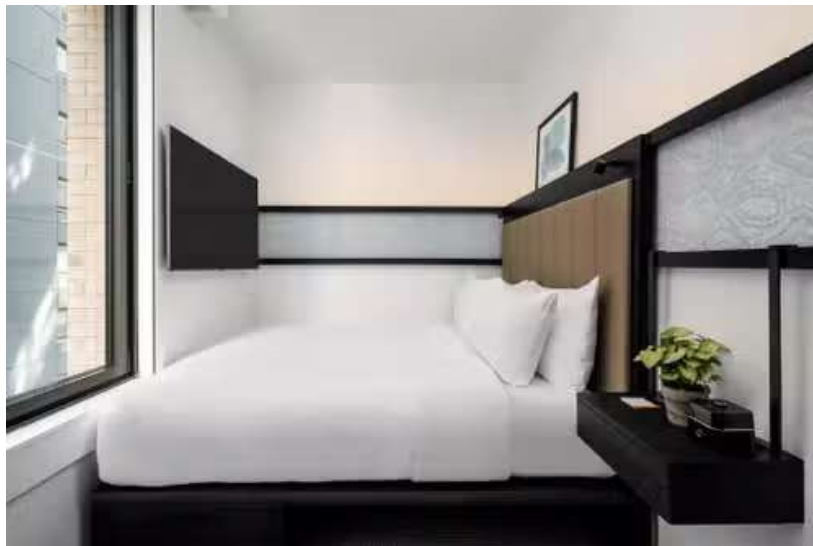
ModernHaus SoHo

In summer, NY sizzles, and a hotel with a pool is an asset. This sharp little design hotel in foodie, sociable SoHo has a great rooftop number, which hosts weekend parties. Bright, Sixties-

feel bedrooms have pops of cobalt blue decor and Bauhaus-era art; a tree-shaded terrace hosts drinks, while a friendly, hands-on team can help you with anything you need down in the stylish wood-panelled lobby. *Doubles from £305 a night, room only. modernhaushotel.com*

The Greenwich Hotel

Most famous for being owned by Robert DeNiro – and having a restaurant where Beyoncé, Bradley Cooper and even Meghan and Harry have broken bread – in reality, the Greenwich is a beacon of calm, privacy and effortless New York style. Rooms are large and individually stocked with butter-soft leather sofas, coffee table art books, whimsical candy gift baskets, Dyson hairdryers and bespoke bathtubs that fill up in seconds. In the basement is a heavenly Japanese-influenced spa with lap pool; at the back is a guests-only lounge and garden reminiscent of LA's Chateau Marmont. The prices, as you might expect, are gasp-worthy. *Doubles from £808, room only. thegreenwichhotel.com*



Smart, space-saving rooms at affordable Arlo Midtown (Arlo Hotels)

Arlo Midtown

For something affordable, try the new Arlo hotel in Midtown, a design-hotel wunderkind with light, essentials-only monochrome rooms, a petite but vibey rooftop bar and huge, high-ceilinged lobby. There's a basic but modern gym in the basement and all the first-timer sights are within walking

distance. *Double rooms from £159, room only.*
arlohoteles.com/midtown



Russ & Daughters, Lower East Side (Russ & Daughters)

Where to eat

Essex Market

New York's indoor food markets are on the rise, with one to be found in most areas – they're a great shout for tasting "a bit of everything" in a city with far too much to try in one trip. Essex Market, on the Lower East Side, is our pick: pop in for lunch to grab cult fried rice balls from Arancini Bros, bagels from Davidovich or purple *ube* ice cream from L.E.S Ice Cream Factory. For something so now, book Dhamaka, a hot new Indian restaurant on the edge of the market.

Carbone

This is the swanky pasta place New York regulars fight over reservations for – its spicy rigatoni vodka is the stuff of legend. The neon sign, dark-wood panelling, swing classics on the stereo and suited waiters give it a pleasing mobster undertone, while inky blue walls, tiled floors and painted Italian crockery keep things stylish.

Russ & Daughters

This Lower East Side institution may have the humble looks and well-stocked fish counter of the 1914 Jewish deli it once was, but

it's got the queues and turnover of a 2022 "it" brunch spot. Get your name in early on weekend mornings, then wander the indie-store-packed LES while you wait – the silky smoked salmon (lox), cream cheese (schmear) and plump bagels (boiled in traditional NY style) are worth the wait, as are goodies you may not have had before: comforting potato knishes, matzo ball soup or an array of caviar.

L'Abeille

For an upmarket, still-fresh newcomer in this city of constant openings, Tribeca hotspot L'Abeille feels like a fine-dining fan's secret. A mishmash of fine French cuisine and Japanese flair courtesy of chef Mitsunobu Nagae, it has a glamorous but unpretentious dining room, a wide open kitchen and friendly bar staff waiting to make you a killer aperitif. Tasting menus cost \$185 (£150) for an eight-course extravaganza, with an added \$115 (£94) for wine pairings. Each dish is a dainty, luxurious creation, with seafood carpaccios, melting-soft wagyu fillets and fruity granitas making regular appearances on a seasonal menu.



The entrance to Ray's Bar (Max Flatow Photography)

Where to drink

Ray's Bar

A kitsch, Americana-themed dive bar with a huge stars'n'stripes flag, checkerboard floors and haphazardly strung fairy lights, Ray's is actually a secretly starry hangout. Part-owned by actor

Justin Theroux as well as *Succession*'s Nicholas Braun (cousin Greg), this Lower East Side spot is an artfully designed faux-dive-bar which opened in 2019. Pop in for a bottled beer, a shot of whisky and a singalong to some rock and hip-hop classics under the disco ball.

Trailer Park Lounge

If you want something that feels like an all-American road trip stop rather than a glossy hotel bar, Trailer Park Lounge delivers in spades. Elvis memorabilia nudges up against 1950s Coca-Cola ads, plastic Christmas reindeer and tiki bric-a-brac, on crowded walls featuring the wall of a trailer and vintage car seats. Neon-tinged cocktails come adorned with tinsel, paper flamingos or pineapples; burgers are served, but you don't come here for the cuisine. Be warned – minimalists may shudder.

Bemelmans Bar

A really swanky cocktail in a storied hotel bar is something you should add to your "NY before I die" checklist, and for our money, Bemelmans (on the Upper East Side) packs the most vintage romance for your buck. The ground-floor cocktail bar in the nearly century-old Carlyle Hotel has artfully dimmed lamps, sweeping murals illustrated by Ludwig Bemelman, who created the Madeline picture books, and does a damn fine Manhattan (or Martini). Table service by suited and booted waiters whisks you back to the golden age of travel, as does ivory-tinkling by a house pianist and crooner.



SoHo is a prime shopping quarter (Getty)

Where to shop

Fifth Avenue

This broad boulevard's department stores and flagship boutiques are as much a sightseeing attraction as a shopping spot, whether you're doing an Audrey in the window of Tiffany's (number 727), a Marilyn in Harry Winston (701), or browsing the rails of designer gear at Bergdorf Goodman or Saks. They're particularly worth your time in the run-up to Christmas, when you should combine seeing their over-the-top window displays with a trip to Rockefeller Center's Christmas tree and ice rink.

SoHo

A picturesque grid of streets that once contained galleries and artists' lofts, this quarter is now wall-to-wall fashion boutiques with goodies from streetwear to footwear and fragrance. There are still a few galleries, too, along with vintage shops and indie fashion stores. You won't be short of cult cafes and bakeries for a pitstop, either.

The West Village

The West Village has a scattering of cute shopfronts, from legendary Left Bank Books on Perry Street to romantic frock shop LoveShackFancy on Bleecker. Get a coffee to go, wander, peruse, and fall in love with the neighbourhood.

Architectural highlight

It's worth learning a little about New York's world-recognised skyscrapers – the Skyscraper Museum or an architecture tour can get you up to speed on its 20th-century “race to the sky”. Pick your favourite landmark, but I rather like the Flatiron Building, which transforms from a slender tower to a wide cake-slice as you approach it.



The Flatiron Building: everyone has their favourite NY tower
(Getty/iStock)

Nuts and bolts

What currency do I need?

US Dollars.

What language do they speak?

English, though Spanish and many other languages are spoken here, too.

Should I tip?

Yes, and be prepared for some local attitude if you don't tip enough. Generally speaking, the going rate is 18 to 20 per cent of your bill. But it's not uncommon to tip up to 25 per cent, even though Brits will likely baulk at the base price. It's customary to tip bartenders and baristas a dollar or two per drink, too.

What's the time difference?

Five hours behind the UK.

How should I get around?

This is a big city, with Manhattan's length meaning you'll need to use the subway or taxis to get from north to south. The subway (underground train network) is somewhat confusing to navigate, so do some research ahead of time and buy a MetroCard on arrival to pre-load with some dollars. Some people are nervous about taking the subway, but it's largely safe,

busy and well-lit. Be aware, too, that NY's iconic yellow cabs can run up big bills – you're also expected to tip. Uber is operational but it can be hard for drivers and customers to find each other on complex one-way systems.

What's the best view?

Some say it's one of the big skyscraper viewing decks: the newer One World Observatory, the sleek, central Top of the Rock or the seen-on-screen Empire State. I say it's from the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Bridge at golden hour or sunset, looking back at the world-famous russet arches and Manhattan's skyline beyond.

Insider tip?

If you're seeing the Statue of Liberty, people will tell you to "Just get the Staten Island Ferry – it goes right past." In reality, it sails a serious distance away from Lady L, leaving her a thumb-sized imprint across the water. It's worth paying for the official boat tour to go right up to the island and see her from below, whether or not you pay extra to climb up into her head.

Getting there

Trying to fly less?

Cargo ships occasionally go from Southampton to New York, with more frequent vessels serving Le Havre in France and Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

Fine with flying?

British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, JetBlue and Norse Airways all have direct flights from the UK to New York. Be sure of your airports – JFK is in Queens, a 45-minute drive east of Manhattan, while Newark Liberty is in New Jersey, 30 minutes west. The latter sees fewer flights but is better served by public transport.

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How do I get to Rimini?



An aerial view of Rimini in Emilia-Romagna, Italy (Alamy)

Q Is there a UK airport that I can fly from to Rimini in Italy?

Beverley K

A Not direct. The lovely Adriatic resort – and, just up the hill, the nation of San Marino – is one of a fair number of Italian towns and cities whose airports are intermittently connected to the UK. But currently there are no direct links. Ryanair flies in from Austria and Poland, so at a pinch you could change planes

in (say) Vienna or Krakow – though any connecting flight using low-cost airlines comes with uncertainties attached. If the first flight is late, the second won't wait and the airlines involved will generally shrug off any responsibility for a missed transfer.

I then checked flights to Forli, about 20 miles away. Like Rimini, it is served by Ryanair – but although I once flew in to Forli (from whose airport you can handily walk into town) the main route now, unhelpfully, seems to be to and from Katowice in Poland. You can, though, fly into either Ancona or Bologna, both about 50 miles away, and travel onward to Rimini by regular and inexpensive trains. Both are linked by Ryanair from London Stansted, with British Airways also connecting London Heathrow with Bologna.

Your choice could come down to a simple matter of airport connections. Thanks to the remarkable Marconi Express monorail link (a little shuttle tram) you can travel from Bologna airport to the railway station in just seven minutes – though for a steep €9.20 (£8). From Ancona, the bus trip takes around 20 minutes (fare €5.50/£4.80) but there are long gaps between departures.

In your position I would make the most of the opportunity provided by the lack of direct flights: build in time to explore gorgeous Bologna, and/or take one route outbound and the other inbound.

Email your question to s@hols.tv or tweet @simoncalder

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